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SUPER PLAY

ISSUE 4
FEBRUARY 1993

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SUPER NBA BASKETBALL
JOHN MADDEN '93
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SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE
SUPER PLAY

Issue 4 February 1993

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Tel: (0458) 74011

***Super Play* is a child of the Leisure Division of Future Publishing, home of Britian's leading computer and console magazines, including *Total!*, *Sega Power*, *Mega*, *Amiga Format*, *Amiga Power*, *Amiga Shopper*, *PC Format*, *ST Format*, *Commodore Format*, *Your Sinclair*, *Amstrad Action*, *PCW Plus*, *PC Answers*, *PC Plus* and – it's lovely! – *GamesMaster*!**

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Printed in the UK
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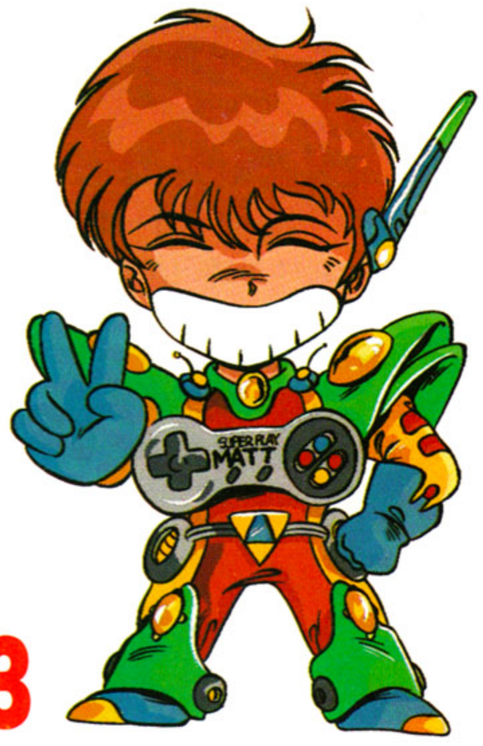
SUPER PLAY EDITORIAL

FROM THE BIG CHAIR



LOOKING FORWARD TO '93

So, how many of you out there got your Super Nintendo this Christmas? I'm hoping it's quite a lot of you – and not just because you're going to have loads of fun with it either. No, it's purely for selfish reasons. You see, the better the SNES does its first Christmas on sale in this country, the bigger the market here is going to be for new Super Nintendo games throughout '93 – and the more potential readers we're going to have!

That said though, what's good for us is good for you too. *Super Play* is already the biggest, best and – yes! – best-selling Super Nintendo magazine in this country, but the bigger the market gets, the more reviews, cheats, news etc we'll be able to bring you every month. We're going to keep on getting better, and that's good news for all of us.

So, if you're a new Super NES owner, I'd like to congratulate you not only on your choice of games machine – the best in the world right now, no doubt about it – but on your choice of mag too.

Right, now on with the rest of this month's news. One thing you'll notice this issue is a new reviewer's name cropping up amongst the three regulars. He's Rich Pelley, a veteran of *Amiga Power*, *Your Sinclair* and others, and we'd like to welcome him to the team.

However, the best news this month is that we've now signed up a Japanese correspondent. His name's Peter Evans – a British computer consultant working in Japan, and he's well into Japanese console games – mainly RPG's – and also Japanese anime. He'll be contributing a regular Live From Hell City column to our Super Express pages, where he'll be describing exactly what it's like living in Japan, with special reference to the Super Famicom scene over there.

It doesn't end there, either. We're also in negotiation with a programmer from one of the top Japanese SNES developers to contribute regular Japanese news to us too! More about that next issue.

Finally, this issue is the last month we're going to run our special *Akira* video subscription offer. If you've not subscribed, and you don't want to miss out, make your way to page 100 now. You know it makes sense.

Matt Bielby

Editor

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SUPER EXPRESS

Super Play's World News Network

Simply the greatest news section ever seen in a UK console mag. (And it starts over the page...)

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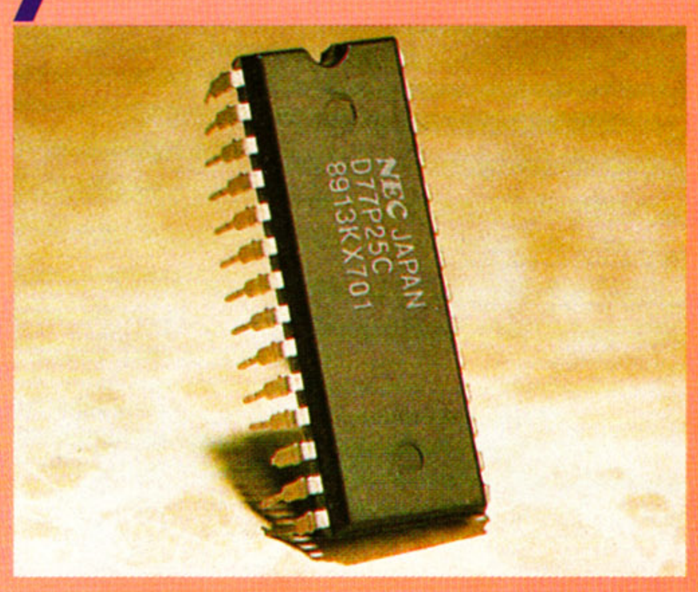
SPECIAL F/X CHIPS

They're the future of Super NES gaming 48

What your Super Nintendo is capable of doing will increase dramatically over the next year – without you having to buy any extra hardware. The reason, of course, is the arrival of Argonaut's new Super F/X chip, Nintendo's DSP chip, and other new cartridge-mounted ways of increase the power of your Super Nintendo.

But how do they work? What can they do? What will the games be like that run them? And how much will they cost? Jason Brookes explains all...



Everything you ever wanted to know about chips, but were afraid to ask...

SUPER PLAYER'S GUIDES

Another World 64

The complete solution (half anyway) to one of the most gorgeous-looking SNES games yet.

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We take this bizarre – yet brilliant – slash-'em-up-cum-god-sim to pieces.

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A Bee Team Production

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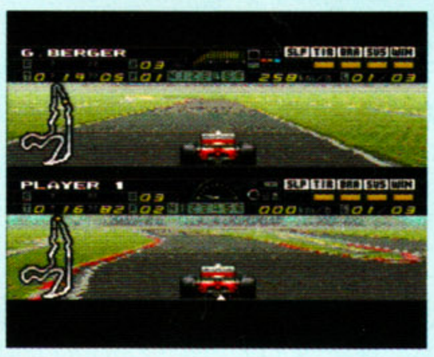

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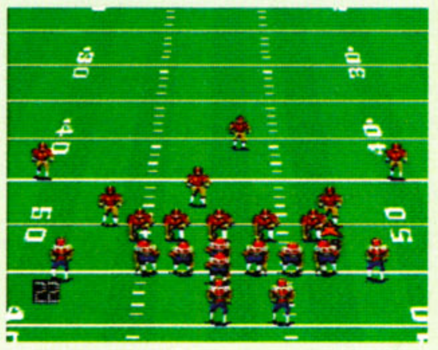

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SUPER EXP

GamesMaster Live!

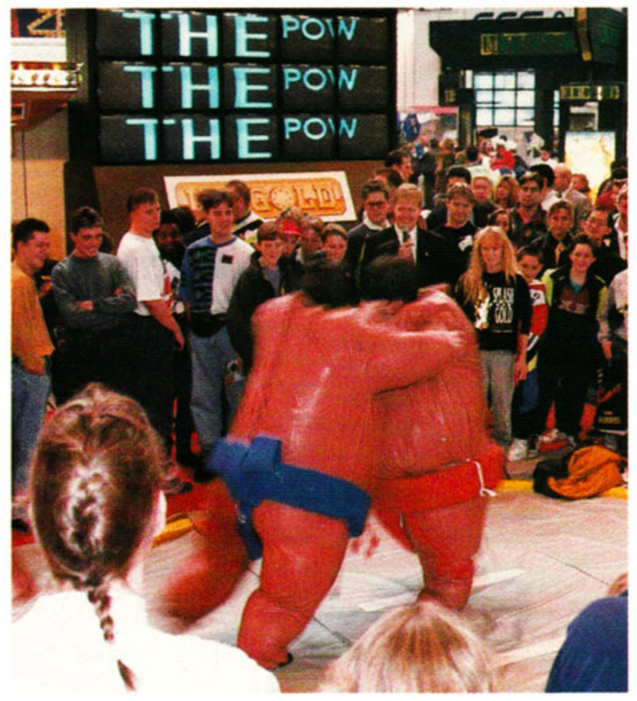
THE (SECOND) GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH!

BIRMINGHAM NEC 4-6 DECEMBER

This month: All the new adaptors on test, Europe's greatest *Super Mario Kart* challenge, our new Japanese correspondent starts and – STOP PRESS! – Nintendo's first Super FX chip game revealed!

December saw the second of last year's big consumer games shows, GamesMaster Live, arrive at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. Following the overcrowding problems seen at the rival Future Entertainment Show at Earls Court a month earlier (see last issue for details), much was made of the fact that the total floor area of the hall booked was considerably larger than that at Earls Court, hopefully allowing punters a lot more room to breathe. And in the event this did prove to be the case, though the vast, dark, hangar-like arrangement the NEC provided also made for a much less coherent-feeling show.

Indeed, despite the fact that there were a lot of stands at GamesMaster Live, the arrangement of them – with the large, impressive software-house stands seemingly plonked down at random – left a lot to be desired. Despite some individually impressive displays, the show overall had a rather random feel.



Two blokes in mad sumo wrestler suits having a tustle for reasons we haven't quite managed to work out yet.

The gang's all here! The *GamesMaster* TV show stage plays host to Mario, Blanka, Chun Li, Sonic, Tails, James Pond, Zool, Colin Curley, a Human, and some other people. Dominik Diamond, ashamed to be seen in such company, is nowhere to be found.

The actual physical appearance of the hall seemed to work against the presumably intended effect too. It was a grey, dreary weekend, which couldn't have helped, but the relatively low ceilings, lack of decent hall lighting (a deliberate policy, meant to recreate the gloominess of the TV programme, perhaps?) and – a small point this, but actually crucial – absence of carpeting combined to give the impression of something that wasn't quite finished yet.

FEBRUARY 1993 ISSUE 4

SUPER PLAY PROFILES

Brought to you by this little lot:

MATT BIELBY

Greatest sporting achievement: Honours life-saving medal
Favourite length: A mile and a half
Dream car: A Porsche Speedster, like Dylan out of *Beverly Hills 90210* has
Ideal pet: A penguin
Person would most like to be stuck in a lift with: Winona Ryder
New Year's resolution: Never to get drunk again!
What've you been playing?: *Super Star Wars, NHLPA Hockey*

SUE GRANT

Greatest sporting achievement: Winning the egg and spoon race
Favourite length: Seven inches
Dream car: A Jaguar E-Type convertible
Ideal pet: A big, shaggy mongrel
Person would most like to be stuck in a lift with: Phil from *Eastenders*
New Year's resolution: To eat as much chocolate as possible
What've you been playing?: *Fatal Fury, Desert Strike*

JASON BROOKES

Greatest sporting achievement: Fastest 100m at Highlegh Primary School
Favourite length: 6 mm
Dream car: Jaguar XJ220
Ideal pet: My 'westie', Sam
Person would most like to be stuck in a lift with: Geena Davis
New Year's resolution: To get stuck in a lift with Geena Davis
What've you been playing?: *Super Star Wars, Amazing Tennis, Human Grand Prix*

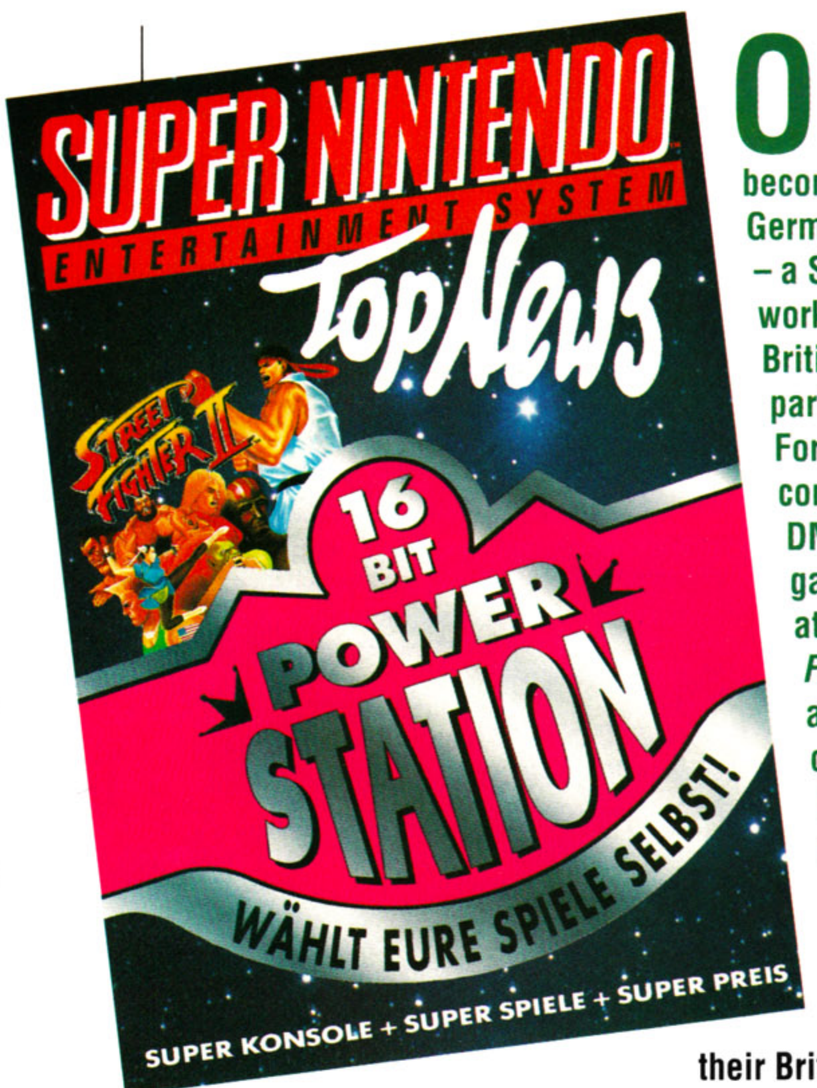
PAL VERSION STREET FIGHTER II FOR £35!

There's one disadvantage: you'll have to go to Germany to get it!

But what was on show games-wise? Well, visitors to the FES will have seen much of it before. Nintendo had the same stand on display again, with the same games, as did Ocean, Electronic Arts and a number of others. The one large software house that wasn't at FES, US Gold, followed Ocean's lead and simply stuck a large piece of fairground hardware with their name plastered all over it in a corner of the hall. (US Gold, of course, don't do Super Nintendo games anyway.) There wasn't much to buy either – though a number of hardware and software retailers had taken stands, relatively little Super Nintendo stuff was being sold.

Where the show did come into its own, though, was with the actual 'GamesMaster Live' part of the event – a large stage built in the style of the TV show set, and featuring live gameplaying challenges hosted by the likes of Nino Firento, Dominik Diamond and – yes! – *GamesMaster* magazine's own Jim Douglas! The three or so performances organised a day gathered an audience that almost threatened to block off one side of the hall at times.

Despite some problems, then, the event has to be judged a success – it did, after all, attract large crowds throughout. It says a lot for the strength of the UK games market too. In stark contrast to 1991, when World Of Commodore (an Amiga-only show) was the only large-scale consumer event in the country, 1992 hosted two successful events in two different towns. The Future Entertainment Show 1993 – to be held at London's Olympia in November – has already been announced. Whether the industry judges itself big enough to host another GamesMaster Live next year too, however, remains to be seen.



One country where things still are incredibly cheap – at least when compared to the sort of prices we've become used to in the UK – is Germany. The Germans use the same PAL TV system as we do – a Super Nintendo bought in Germany will work on a UK TV in exactly the same way as a British model will – but their hardware (and, particularly, software) is sold a lot cheaper. For instance, a Super Nintendo with one controller and an A/V lead comes out at 199 DM, which is somewhere around £70. The games are cheaper too – all software comes at 99 DM, or around £35, including *Street Fighter II*! In other words, the Germans pay around half of what we do for a PAL version of the biggest Super NES game of them all. *Mario Paint* – which, of course, comes with a free Super Nintendo mouse – is the same price too.

So what can we make of this? Well, it certainly throws Nintendo's UK pricing policies – or, rather, those of their British agents Bandai – into sharp relief. We'll hopefully be able to bring you some sort of explanation as to why we're paying twice as much as the Germans for *Street Fighter II*, say, in a future issue.

Above: A German Nintendo brochure – probably one of the most annoying documents we've ever seen!
Right: *Street Fighter II* – affordable in Germany, a nightmare price over here.

JONATHAN DAVIES

Greatest sporting achievement: Grade 3 ice-skating certificate
Favourite length: 100 yards
Dream car: Volkswagen Polo
Ideal pet: Some gerbils
Person would most like to be stuck in a lift with: Philippa Forrester
New Year's resolution: To try and look on the bright side
What've you been playing?: *Super Mario Kart, Human Grand Prix, Desert Strike*

TRACI ROCHESTER

Greatest sporting achievement: London marathon
Favourite length: The impossible
Dream car: VW Beetle
Ideal pet: VW Beetle
Person would most like to be stuck in a lift with: Dawn French
New Year's resolution: To 'help' Jonathan look on the bright side
What've you been playing?: *Boggle.*

JEREMY BRIDGEMAN

Greatest sporting achievement: Got offered a trial for the Welsh basketball team
Favourite length: 6' 2"
Dream car: A Ferrari like in *Magnum*
Ideal pet: My cat Sadie
Person would most like to be stuck in a lift with: Lift mechanic
New Year's resolution: Spend less money
What've you been playing?: *Super Dunk Shot*

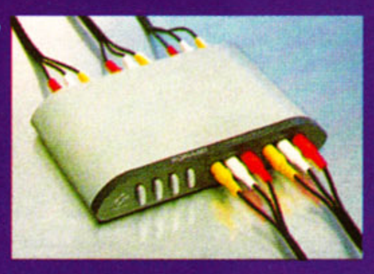
SUPER PLAY PROFILES QUIZ

Which member of the *Super Play* team once inadvertently kicked open the emergency exit of a Cessna light aircraft at 3,000 feet above Cranfield airport? First correct answer to Air Disaster, *Super Play*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW wins a T-shirt! Last month's answer: Jason Brookes. We'll announce the winner next issue. The winner of the T-shirt from issue 1 was Pauline Rogers of Blackpool.

WIRELESS JOYPADS!

(What will they think of next?)

New from Konami in Japan is the Hyper Beam, the neat little gizmo in the bottom photo. It's exactly what it looks like – a completely wire-free joypad, which sends signals to your Super Famicom via a satellite-dish affair. The pad itself is fairly ordinary, the only real advantages being that you're not going to get your leads tangled up during hectic gameplaying, and, presumably, that you can sit a lot further away from the TV than you'd otherwise be able to (a big advantage in Japan, where joypad leads are very short). Konami have no plans to market it in the UK.



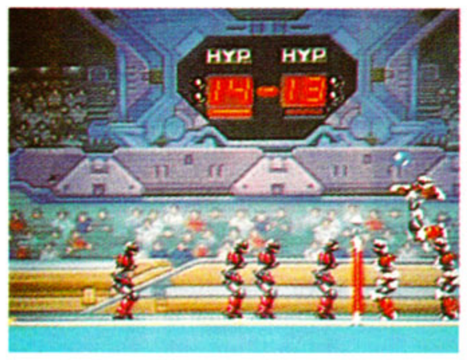
Something else from Konami we're unlikely to see is this game selector doobrie (top). Many Japanese gamefreaks have so many consoles attached to the one TV they use these neat little adaptors to plug everything into. This way they can simply swap from console to console at the flick of a switch. Easy!

Top: Konami's game selector, great for Japanese with a Super Famicom, a Mega Drive and a PC Engine, but only one TV. Above: Lead-free gameplaying ahoy!

VOLLEYBALL (WITH BLOOD!)

Super Volley II Video System

Fans of volleyball who've had their appetites whetted by Tonkin House's *Volleyball Twin* (see page 59) will be pleased to see that there's another, much more radical, volleyball game on the cards. It's called *Super Volley II*, and it's the sequel to the *Super Volleyball* coin-op, versions of which appeared on Mega Drive and PC Engine a couple of years ago. (Strangely, as it was originally planned to come at the time of the Barcelona Olympics, it's all set in Spain.) Unusually, it's a side-on perspective game, which sounds odd – the program assumes the ball will stay on exactly the same plane, and you simply have to move your men backwards and forwards to make sure they get under it. Unrealistic, then, but very effective and playable once you're used to it – there's none of this mucking about with shadows to tell where the ball's going to land. The game has two modes, apparently – a realistic volleyball mode, and an ultra-violent 'hyper mode', which is almost *Speedball*-like in execution.



Yes, you're right – the perspective on *Super Volley II* is weird, but it works.

Also due soon from Video System is *F1 Grand Prix Part II*, the 12 Mbit(!) sequel to their overhead view *F1 Grand Prix* (covered in issue 1), which should see a Japanese release this month.

SUPER PLAY'S STREET FIGHTER

If you believe in doing the right thing, you'll have filled out the voting form for The Golden Bees – the first annual *Super Play* Reader's awards – last issue. (If you haven't, quick! Send your entry in now, and it might just get included!) However, while you're doing that – and while we're sorting your entries – we thought you'd like to hear about the games we'd vote for. No? Well, we're going to tell you anyway...

It's the greatest beat-'em-up ever seen on any home system. It's the most accurate – and best looking – coin-op conversion ever made. It's topped charts across the world for months on end. It's one of the most expensive video games ever sold in the UK. It's...*Street Fighter II*!

VS

It's the most unusual game starring Mario, the world's most famous video game character, yet! It's the cleverest driving game ever! It's one of the first releases to take advantage of Nintendo's brilliant new cartridge-mounted DSP chips! It's got Yoshi in it! It's... *Super Mario Kart*!

To be honest, there are only two real contenders for best game of the year, as far as we're concerned. And they are, as you're no doubt sick of hearing now, *Street Fighter II* and *Super Mario Kart*. That's not to say that 1992 hasn't been a fine year for quality software. Whether we're talking about the import or the domestic market, this has been the year when the Super NES established itself as *the* console to own. Who cares if there are more games available on other systems when the best in the world consistently appear here?

So what made the headlines in '92? Well, shoot-'em-up fans haven't had much to complain about. Konami's contenders *Contra Spirits/Contra III/Super Probotector* (the same game with three different names in three different countries, new readers will be confused to hear), *Parodius* and *Axelay* earned their fans, as did the less predictable appeal of Toho's *Super Aleste* and Acclaim's *Smash TV*. Older classics received their first UK releases too – games like *Super Tennis*, *Pilotwings* and *Super Mario World*. And who could forget the amazingly involving *Zelda: A Link To The Past*?

Still, as we said at the top, there are only two games that could possibly be considered 'Game Of The Year.' While neither *Street Fighter II* nor *Super Mario Kart* can be described as anything new in terms of game type (one's a beat-'em-up, and one's a driving game, after all), it's the way they do what they do that's new. But which is best? Let's find out, as we put them head-to-head...

GAME OF THE YEAR
II vs SUPER MARIO KART

WE PICK THE BEST OF '93!

	STREET FIGHTER II		SUPER MARIO KART	
GRAPHICS	Everyone says it looks just like an arcade game and, well, it *does*. Sprites this big have never been so well animated, or versatile, and the backdrops are wonderful. Only real downers are the ugly screen borders.	10	*Mario Kart* is just as impressive, but it doesn't shout so loud. It took a special DSP chip to get two fast 3D graphic windows moving, but the smallish sprites make it all much less exciting to the uninitiated.	8
SOUND	Sadly not as good as the arcade soundtrack, the *SFII* music is one of the weaker points of the conversion. Sound effects are still good though, and Chun Li will even speak to you if you complete the game a certain way!	8	The bouncy soundtrack does its job well, but the sound effects are quite simply brilliant. Each individual cart has its own particular noise, and you can identify every weapon with your eyes shut, just by the sound of it!	8
INSTANT APPEAL	If you hate beat-'em-ups, of course, this won't appeal. However, *Street Fighter II* will grab the rest of us and refuse to let go like no other game. It's easy to get into, but hard to get good at, like all the best games.	9	Unfortunately *Kart* has a 'love it or leave it' effect on new players. Those not used to joypad controls hate it – they can't get anywhere with the game. For the rest of it, though, the speed provides a powerful hook.	8
COMPETITIVENESS	It's almost impossible to separate the two games here. This is the great strength of *SF II* – the game is all about setting a series of challenges, and forcing players to develop new skills to proceed.	10	Again, *Mario Kart* approaches things rather more subtly, but locks its teeth into you all the same. The balloon game grabbed us first, but now the time trials are getting the competitive juices flowing just as well.	10
DEPTH	What makes *Street Fighter II* such a success story is its depth of gameplay, perhaps best appreciated by experienced, dedicated players – you need to play the game a *lot* to get most out of it.	9	*Mario Kart* turns out to boast of the most involving and clever gameplay we've ever come across. The sheer range of driving tactics that can be applied is phenomenal, and you never stop learning and improving.	10
ORIGINALITY	No contest here, sadly. *SFII*, great though it is, is just a very competent conversion of a popular arcade game. It's not what it does that surprises people, but how well it does it. Little about the game is actually 'original.'	7	At first this doesn't look too original either, but hold! Who's ever come across a driving game as well thought out and detail packed as this? Or one with so many weird courses and characters? No one, that's who.	10
VARIETY	Can you call two characters standing on a non-scrolling screen, kicking the stuffing out of each other, variety packed? Not normally, no, but *SFII* makes a damn good try, with a great choice of characters and moves.	8	Again, *Mario Kart* manages to leave other, fairly one-note, racing games behind, with a wide choice of courses, very different qualities to the eight characters you can choose to race, assorted pick-ups etc.	10
'WOW FACTOR'	It has to be said, *Street Fighter II* has this in spades. Few games have ever received the build up this has, while continuing rumours of secret features indicate there's no end to the fascination players have with the game.	10	*Mario Kart* came with the cache of being a Mario game – and Nintendo's reputation for great games – but, beyond that, sex appeal seems a bit lacking. However, expect more interest in it now it's on official release.	8
	TOTAL	71	TOTAL	72

Phew, close eh?

An incredibly tight contest, then, though the result might not quite be what many people expected. The thing is, you see, that while these are both works of gaming genius – and *Street Fighter II* is the flashier, sexier title – we believe *Super Mario Kart* contains more long term appeal. And, though both are, of course, currently unbeatable (in their own ways) with two players, we prefer *Kart* as a one-player game for the following reasons: a) individual games last longer, b) it's challenging without resorting to a handicap meter (150cc mode anyone?) and c) it has bags more charm than *SFII*, and we tend to go for that sort of thing. Though we still play both games in the office far too much, we can see the day coming when *SFII* is relegated to the software cupboard, but *Mario Kart* continues to live right next door to the office SNES, constantly giving us that 'just one more go' come on.

And then, of course, there's the bottom line for most people – price. With the UK version of *Street Fighter II* at £65 (where it's available), and *Mario Kart* at £40, there's really no contest at all in the value for money stakes...

- Check out the games *you* voted for when we run the results of the *Super Play* Golden Bee Readers' Awards – the UK's first Super NES gaming awards – in our April issue (*Super Play* 6), on sale in the first week of March.

ONLY IN JAPAN...

The land of the Super Famicom is also the land of many weird goings on. Like these, for instance...

RELATIVES TO RENT!

● A trend currently sweeping Japan is that of relatives to rent! Old couples – often those with families who have moved out of town or are too busy to visit them – rent young surrogate families, using actors chosen from a dating agency-style book, to 'pretend' to be related to them for a day. They will normally come around for tea and talk about family matters, or go for a day out together. Rarer, though it does happen, is that young couple will rent surrogate 'grandparents' to play with their young children, or single men will hire a complete family (wife and kids) for a family trip out.

Whether similar services ever take off in this country remains to be seen...

● More news from the recent *Dragon Quest V* queues in Tokyo. Apparently 10 different incidents were reported across Tokyo of successful buyers of the game on its day of release being mugged by jealous fans who hadn't managed to get one. No money was taken, just the game, and no doubt a certain degree of pride...

ONLY IN THE UK (!)

WEIRD THINGS CAN HAPPEN IN THIS COUNTRY TOO...

Street Fighter II sales skyrocket!

● Nintendo are predicting that by Christmas Eve they'll have sold 250,000 copies of *Street Fighter II* – in the UK alone! That's, er... (prod, prod, prod) £16 million worth – amazing, considering how long the game was available in the UK on grey import before its official release. By the way, other countries (particularly the US) are sore at the fact that *SFII* is being bundled with the SNES in this country – it's a deal they're eagerly awaiting.

MARIO WITH BALLS

Mario Bros pinball table hits town!

Yes, you're right – this *is* small for a pinball table. That's so it'll fit in just about any corner.

Gone out shopping? Missing Mario? Just pop into the nearest arcade or pub – if you're old enough, of course – and with any luck you'll find a *Super Mario Bros Mushroom World* pinball table. Mario's in it, along with all his little friends, and it complements the *Super Mario Bros* machine you might already have seen. 'It comes in a compact size,' it says here, 'making it ideal for all locations especially bedrooms.' (It comes with either long or short legs, too, in case you're a bit small.)

SNES with a hole

Pay while you play

But there's more! Look around a bit more and you might also come across the Super System. This is basically a Super Nintendo in a big cabinet, turning into a coin-op. Once you've put some money in you can choose from *Super Mario World*, *F-Zero* and *Super Tennis*, but Ocean's *RoboCop 3* and *The Addams Family* are due fairly soon. If you want to buy one, the Super System costs £1,500. You may have to run though – with the closing down of Nintendo's coin-op manufacturing division, it's unclear exactly what the Super System's future will be.

Right: The Super System – with this you can play all your favourite SNES games down the arcade.

Nintendo make record profits! (Surprise, surprise...)

***Mario* and *Zelda*: a couple of nice little money earners for The Big N.**

Nintendo seems set to become the third biggest profit maker in Japan this year, having made nearly £1.5 billion between April and September alone. Only Toyota and Japan's telephone company will make more dosh. Admittedly many Japanese companies have been having a rough time of it this year, with profits down by 30% on average, but Nintendo have still got to be admired – this is a remarkable performance, especially for a company with a mere 980 employees. (Of course, you could argue their 'optimistic' pricing policies must have something to do with it...)

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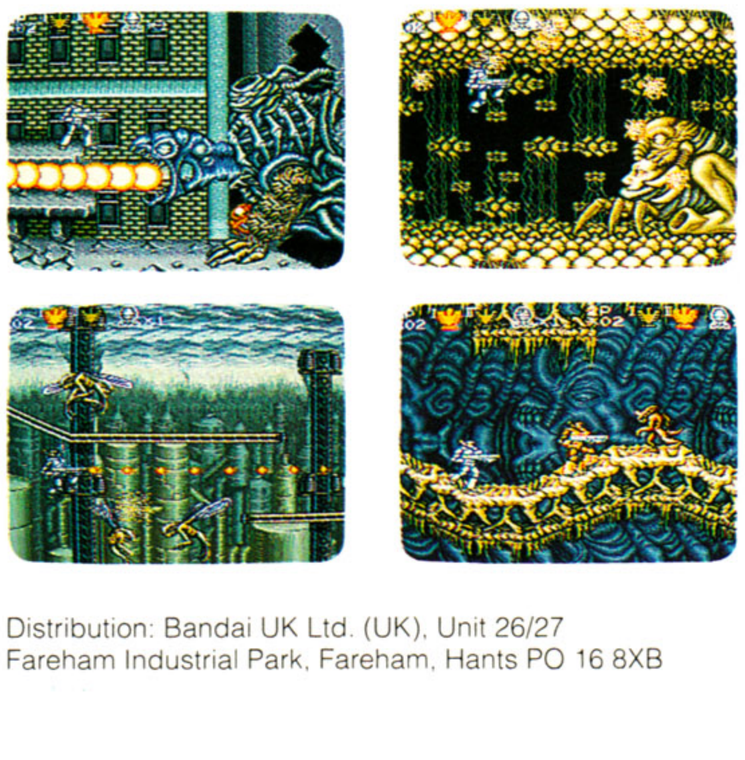

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SUPER EXPRESS

LIVE FROM HELL CITY

12

TOKYO BLUES

FEBRUARY 1993 ISSUE 4

Above: Peter Evans, reporting live from Tokyo.
Main pic: The Shinjuku skyline, seen from across town. These are among the only skyscrapers in Japan, fear of earthquakes stopping most tall building.

Yes, *Super Play* has at last got a Japanese correspondent! He's called Peter Evans, he's a British computer expert and writer living in Tokyo, and he's a big fan of both computer games (mainly RPGs) and Japanese anime. He'll be reporting on both the latest Super Famicom releases, and Japanese culture generally. If you enjoyed Peter Molyneux's Tokyo Diary in issue 2, you're going to love this...

It's... Peter Evans!

Hi, I'm Peter Evans and I'm going to be your guide to life in Japan over the next few months. The problem is knowing where to start. This is a massive, incredibly busy, city – and Japanese culture is so very different to European, it almost seems a hopeless task trying to explain it all. Still, I'll give it my best shot.

So what shall I talk about? At first I was planning to go on about life in Tokyo, but that's still far too big a subject. Instead, I'm just going to concentrate on one of the more interesting areas, Shinjuku.

But first you've got to understand just *how* big Tokyo is. It's a gigantic city (only Mexico City is larger). It's quite possible to sit on a train and travel in a straight line for an hour, seeing only buildings. All of them coloured grey by the wet stuff that falls out of the sky here and is mistakenly called rain. A layer of grey air seems to hang over the city, cutting down on visibility quite noticeably (at least, it would if there weren't too many buildings in the way to tell).

Still, at least the train system is one of the best in the world. It has to be, the number of people it moves every day. From where I live, near the deeply exciting district of Noborito, it takes about 20 minutes on the Odakyu line to reach Shinjuku. At 8am in the morning there's a train every two minutes, with every other one

A typical bike park outside a train station – and nobody's seat gets nicked!

being either a 'limited express' or an 'express' (trains that only stop at a handful of places, thus going very fast).

Despite the number of trains, though, they're still incredibly packed. During the rush hour(s), the stations employ students as 'pushers' – it's their job to see that these mobile tin cans are as full of sardines as is physically possible.

Perhaps because everyone's packed so close, nobody talks on the trains. Instead, Sony Walkmans are everywhere. Everybody owns at least one, from the cute little schoolgirls in their sailor girl uniforms to the respectable middle-aged kaishain (company employees). Once on the train, 80% of commuters put their earphones on, close their eyes, then turn on, tune in and pass out. Meanwhile, the remaining 20% stare out blankly at the scenery, doubtless wishing they'd remembered to recharge their Walkman batteries the night before.

Lost in Shinjuku station

Still, the train is fast. It's convenient (it's really the only way to get to work the same day that you left home). And it's relatively cheap. 200¥ will get you a long way – and in relative comfort if you're prepared to travel in unusual directions at odd times.

At the Tokyo end of the Odakyu line is Shinjuku Station. Any fans of Japanese animation, and *City Hunter* in particular, will recognise the My City building that sits atop the station, along with several other department stores – it appears in the TV series all the time. This is one of the world's largest, and most confusing, stations. There are platforms everywhere. By bitter experience I know that trying to find the Central West Exit at around 8.30am in a torrent of people who seem to know exactly where they're going is almost impossible – you just get swept up in the wrong stream and carried away. This is *not* a place to get lost in.

That being the case, you'd think businesses would try to keep as far away as possible, but no – Shinjuku is actually an incredibly popular place. Why? Well, never mind that the rent for the space of a waste basket is more than double my salary, the fact is that just west of the station is the seat of the Japanese government, and renting next to it is a real status symbol.

Dodging the Yakuza

Actually, this seat of government isn't the bit you may have seen on television – that's the National Diet building, a teutonic monstrosity. The bit that does all the work is Government Building No 1, a 200m high super skyscraper, one of several that make the area such a landmark. Rumour has it this building failed the part of the monolith in 2001 because it was deemed 'too ominous.'

Don't get the impression that this is a very sober, business-like area, however. There is, you see, another thing that Shinjuku is famous for – the area to the immediate north, which has a far from savoury reputation. The 'Pink District' is safe enough by day, but it's a stronghold of the Yakuza (the Japanese mafia), and wandering around at night is not a good idea. It's just a pity all the good cinemas are located around there.

Finally (and you were wondering when I was going to get to this bit, I can tell), Shinjuku is one of the main shopping areas of the city. For the toy enthusiast who's not feeling up to crossing town to Akihabara (the big area where all the electrical shops are located) there is Yodobashi Camera. This is a discount electrical store which has seven (yes, seven) different branches all within a stone's throw of each other. Each of these shops is a multi-storey paradise of electrical goods, from the lowliest of digital watches to FM Towns and other home computers. (They carry cameras too, of course.) They also have a brilliant discount system, where, when you buy one item, you immediately earn yourself 10% off the price of the next one. They have games sections too, of course, which do a roaring trade in discounted carts, particularly Super Famicom and, to a lesser extent, Mega Drive ones.

Shop till you drop!

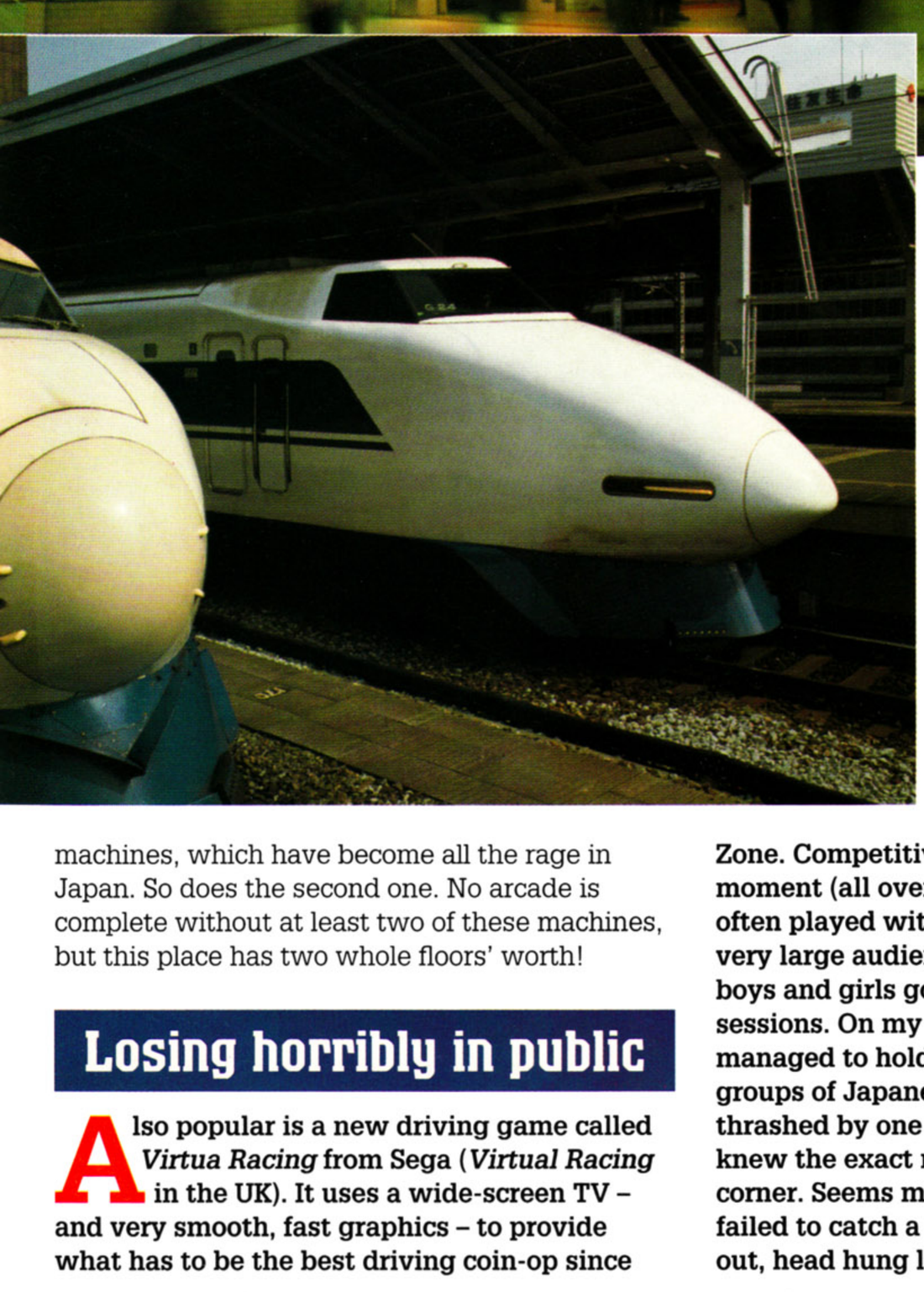
Since we're here then, we'll take a look around some of the more exciting shops in the district. Let's start off with Books Kinokuniya, a labyrinth that manages to sell anything it can conceivably call 'media'. And yes, that includes hundreds of console games, which you'll find hidden somewhere deep in its two buildings and seven floors.

Animee, on the other hand, is a shop that doesn't sell games at all, but anime goodies only – fans of Helen McCarthy's column would feel right at home. Here you can find CDs, manga, original animation cels, posters, phonecards (very popular in Japan, you can get them with pictures of just about anything you like on them), and calendars, featuring characters from *GPX Cyber Formula*, *Ranma 1/2*, *North Star Ken* and others. There's a fabulous one by the artist who illustrates *Final Fantasy V*, for instance.

Still, if it's gameplaying you're after, the place you really want is Taito Game World – one of the biggest arcades I've ever seen. This nestles out of sight in the back streets next to the massive department store, Lumine. However, just because it's hidden away, that doesn't mean it's small – it is, in fact, a six floor temple dedicated to the new electronic gods. The first floor contains nothing but *UFO Catcher*-style

Above: Shinjuku at night. There are areas where only the brave or extremely foolish would tread...
Right: One of a million streetside vending machines.

A typical kid's bedroom – small, but crammed tight with stuff.



Assorted pics of Shinjuku, including at least one cinema, the interior of a magazine-packed newsagent (where you can buy a whole selection of Super Famicom magazines, including the excellent *The Super Famicom* and *Marukatsu Super Famicom*) and a pair of ultra-fast Bullet Trains.

machines, which have become all the rage in Japan. So does the second one. No arcade is complete without at least two of these machines, but this place has two whole floors' worth!

Losing horribly in public

Also popular is a new driving game called *Virtua Racing* from Sega (*Virtual Racing* in the UK). It uses a wide-screen TV – and very smooth, fast graphics – to provide what has to be the best driving coin-op since *Final Lap 2*. In Taito Game World they've got four machines networked together in the Competitive Zone. Competitive games are fashionable at the moment (all over Tokyo, *Street Fighter II* is often played with back-to-back machines to very large audiences). At Taito Game World boys and girls go along for big group racing sessions. On my first go at *Virtua Racing* I managed to hold my own against several groups of Japanese students, only to be roundly thrashed by one very cute OL (Office Lady) who knew the exact racing line to take on every corner. Seems my luck just wasn't in that day – I failed to catch a single UFO as I mooched on out, head hung low, either.

SUPER PLAY EYECATCH

An 'eyecatch' is what the Japanese call their quick TV trailers for upcoming new shows. I just thought it seemed to fit this, my quick round up of some of the more interesting Japanese games due for release soon, and which *Super Play* will be reviewing over the next few months...

SUPER PINBALL

by Naxat

Just released over here, *Super Pinball* comes from Naxat, the people who did *Devil Crash*, the brilliant PC Engine pinball game that's generally reckoned over here to be the best console pinball game ever. Initial reports are that this is of a similarly high standard – *Super Play* should have a complete review next issue.

CALIFORNIA GAMES 2

by Hect

This sports compilation package features hang-gliding, jet skiing, snow boarding, body boarding and skate boarding – as weird a set of 'sports' as you could ever hope to get your hands on. (It's the first in this popular series to appear on the Super Nintendo, by the way.) Expect to see imported copies reaching the UK around March/April.

COSMO POLICE GALIBAN

by Nihon Bussan

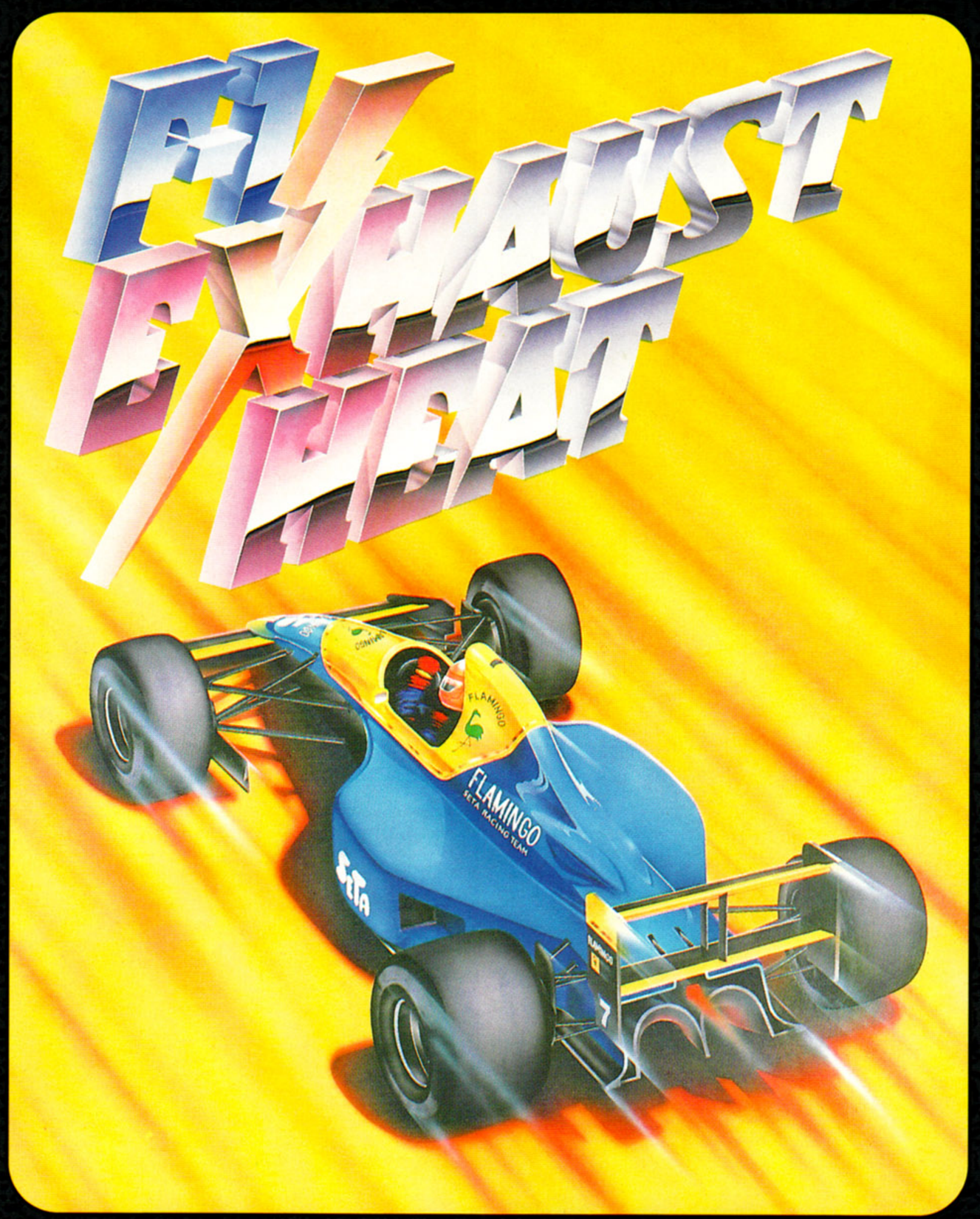
This is an incredibly weird-looking – and, quite possibly, fairly nob – scrolling beat-'em-up thing to be released sometime in the first half of this year. Details will follow, as we get them...

EXHAUST HEAT II

by Seta

The first of the games using Seta's powerful new cartridge mounted game enhancement chip (see page 48), *Exhaust Heat* looks (to our eyes) about 100% better than the (we feel) less than brilliant original – the slow down problem when lots of cars are on the screen should be completely gone for a start. As you can see from the pic, the game looks a bit like a Formula 1 version of *F-Zero*, though whether it will play like one isn't yet clear. The game's been delayed, but expect around March/April for the first copies to arrive in the UK. Whether Ocean will take up UK distribution, as they did with the first game, has yet to be confirmed.

F1 EXHAUST HEAT



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THEY'RE IN!

Super Play's reader survey results!

So, who *are* you guys?

Did you buy *Super Play* issue 1? If you did, you're almost certain to remember the reader survey we ran, our way of trying to find out who the heck you all are, what you like, and so on. Indeed, you may even have contributed to the damn thing, in which case we thank you – the response was shattering. In fact, not only did we abandon the idea of sending Lance Carbine, our specially hired-in PI, round to sort you all out – we actually got him to help out with the enormous task of totting up the numbers. (Forgive any mistakes, they're bound to be his.) So with no further ado, here, in a flurry of facts and figures, is what we found out...

WHO ARE YOU?

- The average age of the *Super Play* reader is n-n-n... er, 17.2. 20% of you are aged 20 or above.
- Each copy of *Super Play* is read by 2.9 people. (Buy your own copies, you cheapskate gits!)
- 11% of you earn over £11,000 a year, and 6% earn a mind-boggling £16,000!

YOUR SUPER NINTENDO

- The overwhelming majority of *Super Play* readers (84%) own an official UK Super Nintendo. The rest own Japanese and American machines in equal numbers.
- In view of this, it's perhaps hardly surprising that most of you bought your machine very recently. About a third of you have 'just bought' your machine, while a hardened core of only 10% have owned it for over a year.
- Your Super Nintendos are largely unencumbered with extra pieces of hardware, though a whopping 41% own an adaptor (for playing import games), with 21% proposing to buy one in the near future. Other future plans include the Super Scope (28%, with 7% already owning one) and a CD-ROM drive – 56% of you want one of those, though you might have to wait a bit – and new joypads and joysticks (22% and 31% respectively).
- Most of you seem happy to stand by your Super Nintendos (rather sensibly). Just 3% are interested in getting a Mega Drive. PCs, Atari STs and Amigas made a better showing with 4% each. As for machines you've already got, well, the NES was the most popular – 26% of you have got one of those. Next was the Amiga at 22%, then the Spectrum (hurrah!) at 20%, the Mega Drive at 15%, PCs at 10% and other machines in dribs and drabs.

YOUR GAMES

- Most of you – 56%, in fact – own between five and 10 carts, with 32% owning 10-20 and 10% owning 20-40. Two people claimed to own over 40 – a likely story.
- 64% are planning to buy up to five games over the next three months.
- When choosing games, 42% of you go by *Super Play*'s reviews, and 65% by magazine reviews generally. Word of mouth and adverts were named as the greatest influencing factor by 17% and 11% respectively.
- You spend a ridiculous amount of time playing games, it seems. 6% spend a couple of hours a week doing it, 11% spend five hours, 25% spend 5-10 hours, 22% spend 10-15 hours, 18% spend 15-25 hours and (wait for it) 18% spend over 25 hours. Over 25 hours a week playing games! For heaven's sake!
- Your favourite types of game are, unsurprisingly, platform games, beat-'em-ups and shoot-'em-ups in that order. Strategy games, simulations and puzzle games came out worst.

YOUR VIEWS ON SUPER PLAY

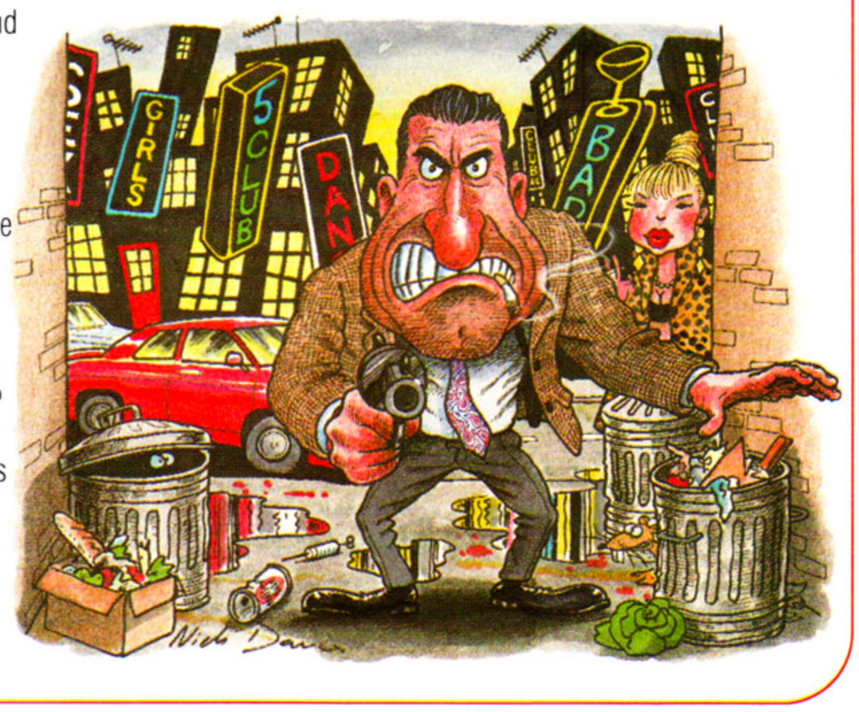
- *Super Play* scored, on average, 8.9 out of 10, with 95% of people awarding it 8/10 or above. That's considerably higher than any of the other magazines you awarded marks to. So a big hurrah! there.
- There didn't seem to be any parts of *Super Play* you didn't like, with everything getting at least 7 out of 10 on average, and most bits getting 8 out of 10. The most popular sections, though, were What Cart?, the Super Nintendo guide in issue 1 and the reviews.

(Sadly, nobody bothered to count up exactly who used what type of toothpaste, but – flicking through the whole post bag of entry forms – Colgate seems to be the clear winner.)

Thanks to everyone who returned their forms, and apologies to those who had trouble getting their biros to work on the paper. Till next year, then! (*What about prizes? – Reader's Voice*) What? (*The prizes. Who won them? – Reader's Voice*) Oh rats.

Okay, these 10 people will be getting a *Super Play* T-shirt in the post : Marc Kimsey of Hextable, Amit Patel of Bolton, Marc Culray of Dunfermline, Harry Peason of Chichester, Jason Eldidge of Birchington, Bob Tilley of London, Dunstan Low of Bolton, David Neale of Colwyn Bay, Brian Wardropper of Windermere and Matthew Burton of Cambridge. Why not think of it as a late Christmas present?

We called off Carbine – *this* time...



Four wheels are better than two!

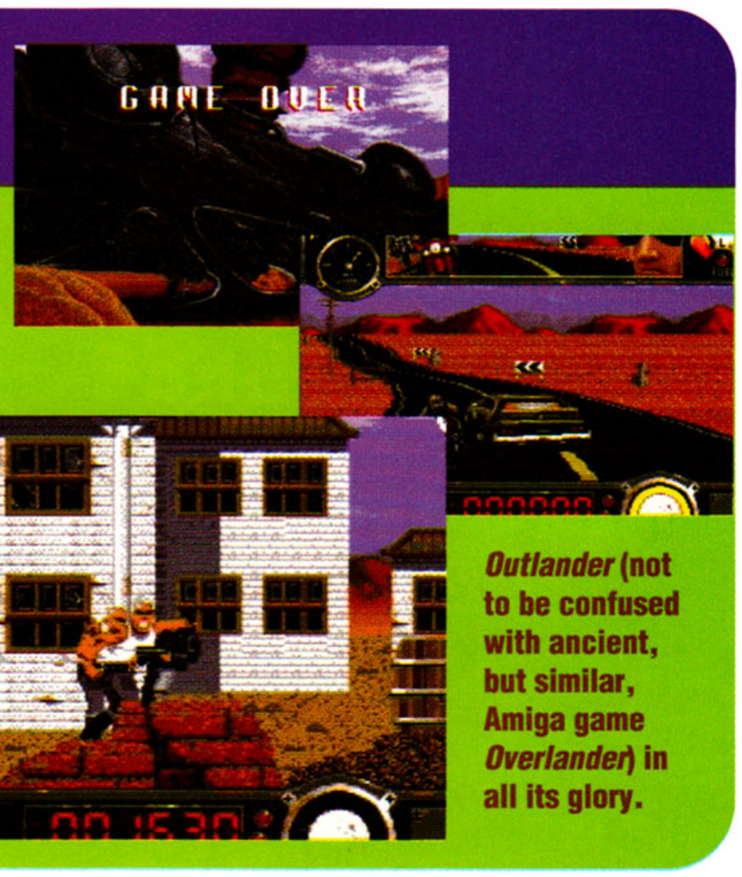
OUTLANDER

Mindscape

Don't you just hate it when you're sitting in a huge traffic jam, patiently waiting for the car in front to edge forward a bit, and some smart alec on a bike comes zooming up from behind and roars off down the queue, missing your wing mirror by millimetres? Well, now's your chance to get your own back! *Outlander* places you in big, black, American car. It's a solidly built thing, with hefty steel fenders, uncompromising bumpers and an evil slant to the hood. It also provides you with guns, both forward- and sideways-firing. It then puts the car onto a long, winding road. And then – and this is the great bit – it populates the road with loads of people on motorbikes. You can probably guess what happens next.

And as if that wasn't brilliant enough, at regular intervals you're given the chance to hop out of your car and take on the leather-clad reprobates face to face. You've still got a gun, but you can punch them too.

By the way, despite the similarities in style (indeed, both games use a Ford Mustang), *Outlander* has nothing to do with Elite's old *Overlander* game. Look for a release in March, and review next issue.



***Outlander* (not to be confused with ancient, but similar, Amiga game *Overlander*) in all its glory.**

BOOKS

Jonathan Davies settles down in his armchair with a glass of orange and the latest in Super Nintendo reading material.

SECRETS
OF THE GAMES
SUPER NES GAMES SECRETS
THE UNAUTHORIZED EDITION
2
Rusel DeMaria Zach Meston
SPECIAL STREET FIGHTER II SECTION
THE UNCENSORED, FULLY INDEPENDENT EDITION
NOT AFFILIATED WITH NINTENDO OF AMERICA INC.!
LOTS OF TIPS NOT AVAILABLE ANYWHERE ELSE!

SUPER NES GAMES SECRETS VOLUME 2

Rusel DeMaria, Zach Meston. Prima Publishing, 350pp, £8.95.

ISBN 1-55958-193-X

I looked at *Games Secrets Vol.1* in issue 1, and reckoned it was the best book of its type on the market. Well, here's Vol. 2, and it's even better.

It's better in the sense that it's got 50 or so more pages. It's better because it covers 18 games (the original only had 13), and it's got smaller tips on 23 more. And it's better because it's quite a bit more up-to-date than the first book, with stuff on games that even we're only just covering. It's even got a slightly more exciting pic on the cover.

What's in it then? There's *Street Fighter II*, of course, which gets a useful guide to all the moves, plus some tips on what it's best to use against whom. *Zelda*'s there, though not in nearly so much detail as in Compute's *Zelda*-specific book. *The Addams Family* gets a good going over, with lots of codes. There's a full set of codes for *Wings II*. There's an addendum to the *Super Mario World* guide in the first book. *Super Adventure Island* and *Another World* get complete guides. And there's lots more. Like Volume 1, the whole book is tightly written, with little waffle and lots of useful pictures.

Corish's
CONSOLE GAMES GUIDE
The Ultimate Console Hint Book covering: Atari Lynx™, Neo Geo™, Nintendo Game Boy™, Nintendo NES™ & Super NES™, PC Engine™, Sega Game Gear™, Sega Master™ and Sega Mega Drive™ Systems
IN EXCESS OF 600 GAME FORMATS COVERED

CORISH'S CONSOLE GAMES GUIDE

Elizabeth Corish (Editor). Kuma Computers, 322pp, £9.95.

ISBN 0-7457-0084-5

The Corish family have made a name for themselves with their computer game guides, and the video game version has been eagerly awaited by the literary world. (Ahem.) It's basically a compendium of every tip for every game on every format that the Corishes could find.

There are tips for over 500 games in here, though only about 30 of them are for the Super Nintendo. They're mostly cheats or Action Replay codes, rather than detailed guides, and many of them have already been printed in *Super Play*. The book's presentation is of the throw-it-all-down-on-the-page-and-hope variety, with no pictures, making it pretty heavy going at times. This is very much a reference book, rather than something to snuggle up in bed with.

Corish's Console Games Guide is most likely to be of use to people who're serious about their consoles, and have maybe got a Game Boy and a Mega Drive tucked away at home to complement their SNES. Otherwise it's not a lot of fun.

If you can't find either of these books in your local bookshop, give Computer Manuals a call on (021) 706 6000 or write to them at Computer Manuals Ltd, 50 James Road, Tyseley, Birmingham B11 2BA.

IT'S THE MARIO

EXCLUSIVE COVERAGE!

In recognition of the UK launch of *Super Mario Kart* (er, okay, and because we were looking for an excuse anyway), we decided to stage the first ever *Super Play Mario Kart* Championships. And, worse than that, we thought we'd show you what happened at them too.

THE BRIEF

The contest was to be based on time trials played on Mario Circuit 1, and would be divided into three stages. First would be the heats, where three contestants would be eliminated. This would be achieved by a series of one-player time trials, three for each contestant, with each person's best time being used to decide their placing. Then the three remaining contestants would proceed to a series of play-offs. Here each person would race against everyone else once in a two-player time trial. The two victors would then go forward to the final. Got all that? Oh, and in the interests of equality, Mario and Luigi would be used in all races.

THE CONTENDERS

MATT BIELBY: Though Matt seems oblivious to the fact, he's not exactly regarded as a crack games player around these parts. He's played a lot of *Mario Kart*, though.

JEREMY BRIDGEMAN: Jeremy is very much the sporting man – he's a basketball referee and player when he's not designing pages of *Super Play*. But would his sports skills extend to karting?

JASON BROOKES: Day after day, Jason is humiliated by the rest of the team on *Mario Kart*'s balloon game. 'Just you wait,' he threatened. What could he mean?

JONATHAN DAVIES: Author of issue 2's Super Player's guide, and Future Publishing's undisputed balloon game champ, Jonathan is known not to be a fan of time trials.

SUE GRANT: More highly regarded for her *Street Fighter II* skills than her driving, Sue has nevertheless gained plenty of karting experience while performing her screen-grabbing duties.

TRACI ROCHESTER: Cross Traci at your peril. Jonathan was a little worried about the consequences in the event of her defeat.

SUPER PLAY

KART CHALLENGE

Europe's most important *Super Mario Kart* event of '92!

THE HEATS

Traci and Jeremy might be pretty hot when it comes to laying out pages, but, as it turned out, their karting skills left a lot to be desired. Traci only once managed a sub-two-minute time (mainly because she was holding the controller the wrong way round the whole time, and no-one dared to tell her). Jez did a bit better, with several times of around 1' 20", but it was clear that he was never going to be a champ. The real dark horse was Sue. She started off badly, spending more time off road than on, but by her third attempt had got her overall time down to a respectable 1' 16".

Unfortunately, however, it was three winners we were after, and (perhaps inevitably) Matt, Jason and Jonathan went through to the play-offs. Jonathan did best – he was still on form after putting together issue 2's Super Player's Guide – with Jason doing almost as well. (He is, after all, *Super Play*'s self-styled 'gamefreak'.) Truth be told, Matt barely scraped through, leaving Sue looking like a serious contender at one point. Eventually, however, he managed to beat Sue's best time by just over a second to make the play offs.

Those times:

Jonathan	1' 09.45"
Jason	1' 09.86"
Matt	1' 14.96"
Sue	1' 16.02"
Jeremy	1' 19.75"
Traci	1' 55.12"

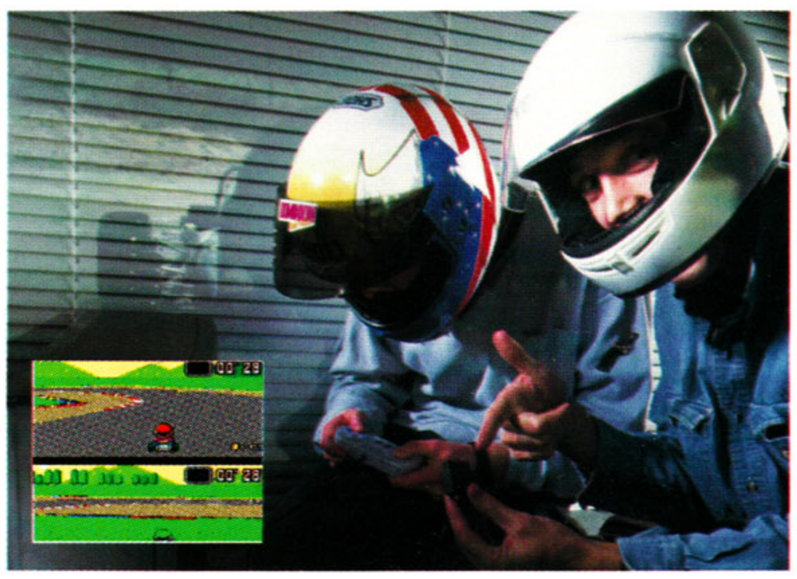
THE PLAY OFFS

JONATHAN VS JASON

Both players took their positions on the starting line and waited for the green light. But – what's this? – Jason makes illicit use of the 'fast start' tip we printed in issue 2. 'I thought we weren't allowed to do that,' protested Jonathan, struggling to catch up. Despite his best efforts, Jason managed to keep the lead for all five laps. Jonathan would have to beat Matt if he was to have a chance at the title.

MATT VS JONATHAN

This time Jonathan wasn't taking any chances, and surged off the starting line. Matt, not unexpectedly, did the same. Jonathan kept up a steady lead, right up until the fourth lap. At that point, sensing that time was running out, Matt lunged for Jonathan and – yes – pushed down his visor, keeping his hand over the perspex and completely covering his eyes. Would you believe it? In the face of this unprovoked violence, Jonathan didn't stand a chance.



JASON VS MATT

If you thought *that* was bad, wait till you hear what happened next. The first two laps seemed straightforward enough, with Mario and Luigi jostling for first position. But then, suddenly, Matt tried his little trick again, lunging for Jason and covering up his eyes! Disgraceful! Not to be out-cheated, however – and using his superior SNES technical knowledge to its best advantage – Jason disconnected Matt's joypad and went on to a convincing (if not altogether honest) win. We had our two finalists then, Jason and Matt.

Oh no! Whatever happened to sportsmanship? Or the concept of fair play?

THE FINAL

Jonathan, relegated to the side-lines, had agreed to act as judge, and both finalists were on their best behaviour. The start was delayed slightly while Jason went to 'powder his nose', which was perhaps why both players failed to achieve a fast start, but the race was then on. Matt crept ahead and stayed there to start with, but then – whether due to a cooler head or an overriding need to prove himself – Jason managed to pass him and stayed there till the end.

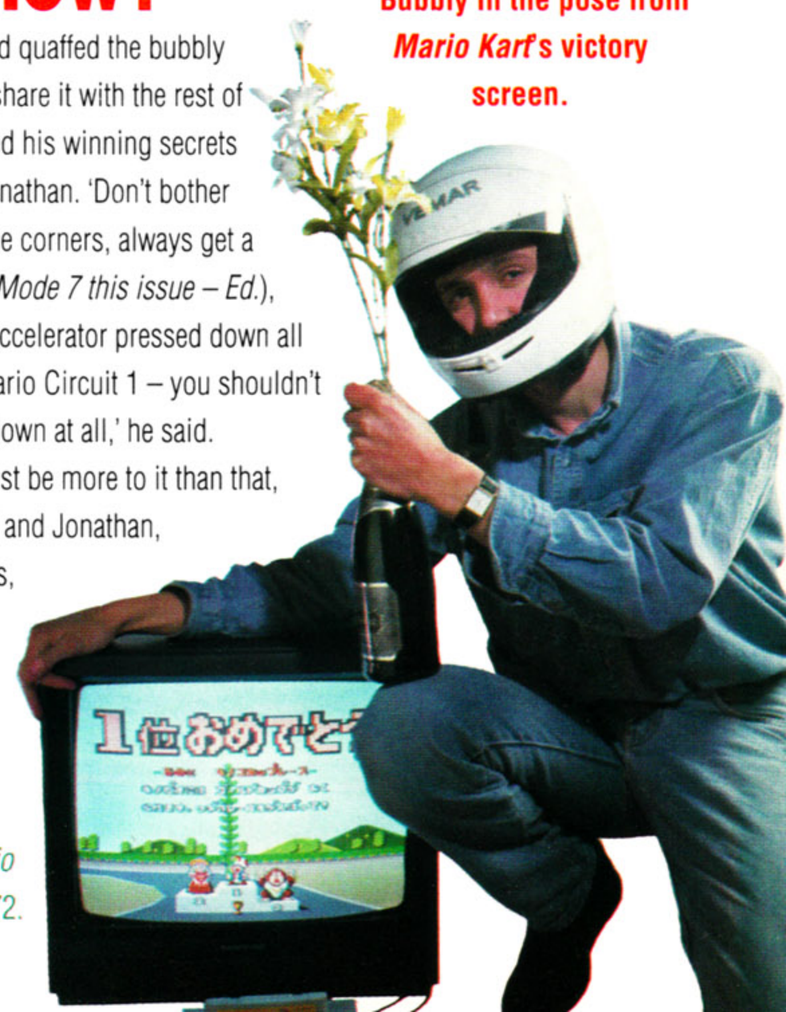
The winning time: an impressive 1' 07.34"

BUT HOW?

After Jason had quaffed the bubbly (forgetting to share it with the rest of us), he revealed his winning secrets to Matt and Jonathan. 'Don't bother trying to cut the corners, always get a fast start (*see Mode 7 this issue – Ed.*), and keep the accelerator pressed down all the time on Mario Circuit 1 – you shouldn't need to slow down at all,' he said.

There must be more to it than that, reckoned Matt and Jonathan, but if there was, Jason wasn't telling...

● You can check out our review of *Mario Kart* on page 72.



Jason holds his victory Bubbly in the pose from *Mario Kart*'s victory screen.

COMPLETE SUPER NINTENDO UNIVERSAL ADAPTOR TEST

PER ARDUA

It's one of the questions we're asked most often: what's the best games adaptor to buy? And might it blow up my machine? With finally reaching a definitive answer in mind, *Super Play* throws open the hangar doors and embarks on the ultimate guide to games adaptors. We sift out the bad eggs and point (through adversity) to the stars.

As we couldn't really do a feature on adaptors without explaining what an adaptor is, here's a concise (and slightly boring – sorry) explanation of exactly what the damn things are, and how they work.

The position, quite simply, is this. If you want to play imported American or Japanese games on your British Super Nintendo – and, for the time being, the vast bulk of titles are only available on import – you'll need an adaptor. This is a piece of plastic and metal that plugs into the cartridge slot of your Super Nintendo. The cart you want to play goes into the top of it, and into the back goes a UK cart. The adaptor fools the machine into thinking that the security chip in the UK cart is actually part of the import cart, and the game works. (It's this security chip that normally prevents a foreign cart running on a UK machine.)

Right, so you're in the market for an adaptor. Which ones are best? And which should be avoided? Or are they basically all exactly the same? We thought we'd find out.

● Note: adaptors covered here are all recent models we've tested with imported versions of *Super Mario Kart*, *Pilotwings*, *Desert Strike*, *Axelay* – games that have all fooled earlier models. Older adaptors, which we can't guarantee to work with these, we've ignored.

UNIVERSAL ADAPTOR

Datel, £14.99, (0782) 744707
(or see Superstore on page 80)
This uses the same casing as the Action Replay cartridge, and had been constructed with loving attention to detail. Datel's adaptor used to have a switch so you could flip from one game to the other, but this has now been removed, as switching between games while the Super NES was switched on wasn't doing it much good. It worked with all the games we tried it with, and looked pretty smart too (though perhaps a little ungainly when it's fully laden and sticking out of your machine).

ARE THEY OR AREN'T THEY SAFE?

Adaptors are the subject of a very heated debate at the moment: will they or won't they damage your Super Nintendo?

The official Nintendo line is 'yes they will'. And, what's more, their engineers will refuse to repair a broken machine if they suspect an adaptor is the cause of the trouble. But then, Nintendo are trying to sell official UK carts.

Ask any grey importer whether they'll damage your machine, though, and you'll get a completely different answer – 'no they won't'. But then, grey importers are trying to sell import carts.

So who do you believe? Well, quite frankly it's up to you. We've been using adaptors in the office for months now with no problems at all – and, to be perfectly honest, we'd be very surprised if we had any in the future either.

You see, there *are* two sure-fire ways of damaging your SNES: connecting or disconnecting a cart while the machine is switched on, and plugging a cart into the adaptor back-to-front. Do either of these and yes, you may well damage it. Avoid doing anything like that, though, and we think you should be okay. (Even if something does go wrong, several normally reliable sources have told us that all that generally happens is that a fuse blows inside the machine – one that's quick, easy and cheap to have replaced.)

Don't try this at home, kids.

ADAPTOR

BY JONATHAN DAVIES

THE ADAPTOR!

Q Systems, £15, (0727) 826753
Yuck! we exclaimed when we first saw 'The Adaptor!' Not only has it got a really naff name, but it looks tacky too – it's made of four sheets of black plastic stuck together with glue. But then we tossed it up and down in the palms of our hands a bit, realised how solidly-built it is, and decided that maybe it is okay after all.

THE ADAPTOR!
FOR THE SNES AND SUPER FAMICOM
Ensure that your console is switched off before inserting or removing this device
coming soon... THE RAM ADAPTOR!
and also... Q-BOX!
© by Q Systems 1992
SNES AND SUPER FAMICOM ARE TRADE MARKS OF NINTENDO OF AMERICA

HONEY BEE SUPER-MAGIC CONVERTER

TDS Trading, approx. £15, (081) 677 5113
We like the Honey Bee adaptor because it has a picture of a bee on it. The colour's spot-on, too, almost matching that of the Super Nintendo itself. And the build quality's impressive – the casing's made of good, thick, plastic – though we found a few bits of stray solder on the connector.

SPELLBOUND ADAPTOR

Krazy Consoles, £12, (0422) 342 901
If an adaptor's worth was decided on how un-plasticky it felt, the Spellbound one wouldn't have a chance. It feels very, very plasticky indeed, and creaks if you grip it too hard. But, predictably enough, it works absolutely fine, and has the distinction of being the lightest adaptor featured here.

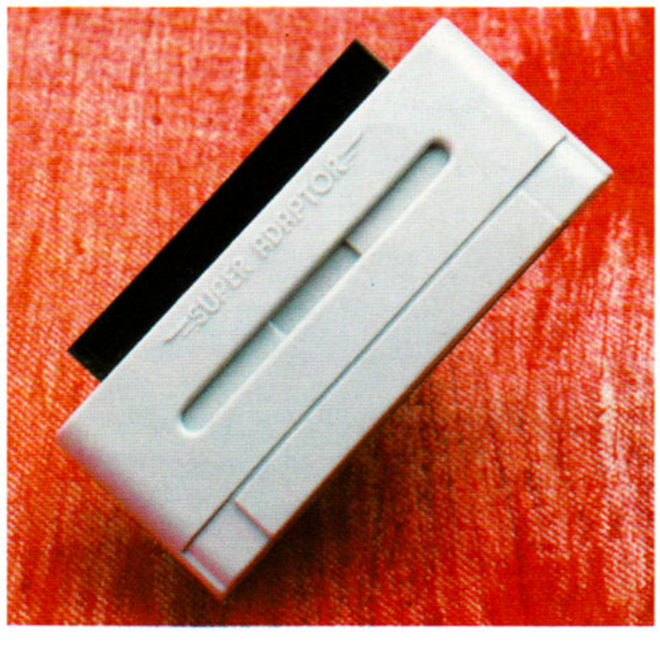
UNIVERSAL GAME CONVERTER

Arcade Software, £19.99, (081) 470 4313)
This one's massive, and once you've plugged it into your cartridge slot it feels like it's there to stay. As well as solidity, it has the advantage of an eject mechanism, so when you push 'eject' on your Super NES the adaptor stays put and the cartridge pops out of the top. Nice.

SUPER PLAY'S Advice

As you might have gathered, all these adaptors do much the same job and picking a 'best one' would be jolly difficult indeed. We'd recommend any of them, quite honestly, and suggest you base your decision on price and which one you think looks nicest. If your wallet is willing, though, the Universal Game Convertor would appear to have an awful lot going for it.

BRIDGE ADAPTORS



Not, in fact, a new way to remove fuzz from jumpers, but a bridge adaptor.

These are simpler than universal adaptors (which will allow you to run any cart on any machine), and are designed to overcome the problems of running American carts on Japanese machines, and Japanese carts on American machines. But wait, you might be saying, aren't those two machines essentially exactly the same? Well, yes – essentially they are. The snag is that the cartridge slots on Japanese machines are too small to accept American carts, and the slots on American machines contain little knobs that stop you inserting Japanese carts into them. The latter problem can be remedied by simply snapping off the knobs using a pair of pliers, but the former can only be resolved through the use of a bridge adaptor (actually just a simple piece piece of plastic) to raise the cart above the cartridge slot. (Complicated, eh?)

NEWS!

Some recent games, such as *Mario Kart*, *Desert Strike* and *Axelay*, don't work too well on older adaptors. In view of this, most adaptor manufacturers have recently been updating their products so they'll work with all games. So, when ordering one, check to make sure it'll work with *Super Mario Kart*. (All the adaptors we've tested here are fine in this respect, by the way.)

MORE NEWS!

There's supposed to be a new adaptor coming out soon that has a security chip built in, so you don't have to plug an extra cartridge into it! This should mean that any risk of 'blowing up your machine' (if there is such a risk) is eliminated. The catch? The manufacturers will have to copy Nintendo's security chip, making it horribly illegal.

EVEN MORE NEWS!

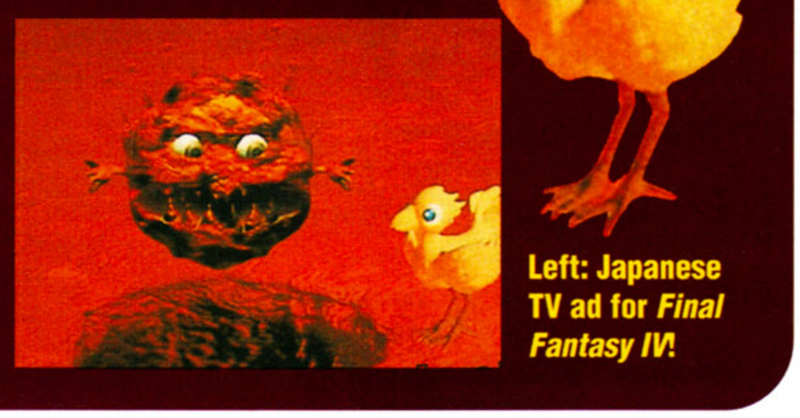
On an even more sinister note (for adaptor makers, anyway), it seems that Nintendo are making cartridges that won't work at all on UK machines – even with an adaptor. (We've got one here in the office, and, sure enough, we can't get it to work with any of our adaptors!) How have they done it? Will the adaptor manufacturers work out what they've done and catch up? We'll let you know. Meanwhile, be extra careful when ordering new import games, and watch out for advice in *Super Play*.

GAMES QUEUING

It's becoming a national pastime in Japan!

Following on from the massive *Dragon Quest V* queues recently (see pic left), the latest incredibly popular fantasy role playing game series to cause chaos on the streets of Tokyo is *Final Fantasy V*. The furore hasn't quite been on the epic scale *Dragon Quest V* created – the game hasn't received quite as many good reviews in Japan as *DQV* or, indeed, the previous game in the *Final Fantasy* series, *Final Fantasy IV* (known as *FFII* in America, just to confuse things) – but the response has still been fairly spectacular. And the public love it!

According to *Super Play*'s Japanese correspondent Peter Evans: 'So far, the only TV exposure it has had are two different TV adverts, both featuring the dodo-like bird from the game. Unlike *Dragon Quest V*, however, there've been no one hour documentaries detailing the history of the game, or any media coverage beyond the usual selection of books and other junk about the game. However, my boss is currently spending at least five hours a day trying to complete it, so it must be doing something right!'



Left: Japanese TV ad for *Final Fantasy IV*!

Will they or won't they?

UNIVERSAL SOLDIER

(Accolade)

The last time we mentioned *Universal Soldier*, it was to tell you that it wasn't to be released in the UK because of problems with the licence. Since then we've had some good news (it will, after all, be released) and some bad news (er, maybe it won't). It's not just the release details that are a little 'open to question', either. The game is actually a reworking of the computer game *Turrican 2*. And when we say 'reworking', what we actually mean is that the sprite has been tweaked slightly to look a bit like Jean Claude Van Damme.

But never mind. *Turrican 2* is a perfectly respectable game (the Mega Drive *Universal Soldier* recently scored 89% in *Sega Power* and the SNES version, from what we've seen of it, looks solid enough). So will *Universal Soldier* come out or won't it? Well, Accolade seem pretty confused at the moment. To help them make their minds up, fill in the coupon below:

Dear Accolade...

Go on, release *Universal Soldier* on the Super Nintendo. Please? ☐

Don't you dare release *Universal Solder* under any circumstances! ☐

(please tick appropriate box)

Name.....

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Send the form to Dear Accolade, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW.

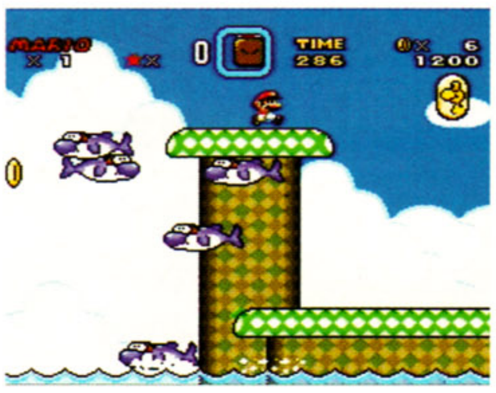
SUPER PLAY'S HOT LIST

Er... Got a Super Nintendo for Christmas? Wondering what to buy to go with with it? Here are five of *Super Play*'s current faves...

SUPER MARIO KART

(Nintendo)

We can't stress enough just how good this game is – but we'll keep on trying. It's not just the best driving game on the Super Nintendo, with Mario and all his friends, it's actually four brilliant games in one: there's the Grand Prix game, the Time Trial, the two-player Head to Head and – best of all – the amazing balloon game.



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

(Nintendo)

It wouldn't really be fair to call *Zelda* a role-playing game – a term that smacks of screens full of numbers and funny-shaped dice. It's more of an adventure, and a really great one at that. Gently paced, but with never a dull moment, it'll keep you captivated till you've reached the end – and that'll take ages.

MICKEY'S MAGICAL QUEST

(Capcom)

No game has ever come closer to looking like a real cartoon than this. The graphics are incredibly well designed and animated, and an extraordinary amount of imagination has gone into both Mickey and the baddies he comes up against. It's terrific fun to play, too, though a bit easy.

THE IREM SKINS GAME

(Nintendo)

Skins isn't perfect – there's only one course in it, and not a lot of depth to the gameplay – but if it's a golf game you're after this is your best bet at the moment. It's really easy to get to grips with, and the graphics are absolutely smashing.

ACTRAISER

(Enix)

A strange combination of platform game and god-sim, the weirdest bit is that it actually *works*. Neither section is exactly outstanding in itself, but together they form a delightfully absorbing whole.

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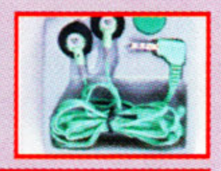

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ANIME WORLD

Pronounced 'ah-nee-may'

GAMES YOU HAVEN'T PLAYED YET

The world of Japanese animation is full of brilliant films and TV series that would make great Super Nintendo games – if only someone would get around to developing them. Here Helen McCarthy picks a few of her faves, and suggests how they could perhaps be done...

Below: This is the M66 F6 robot from *Black Magic M(ario): 66* – it may look like a cute Japanese girl (sort of), but it's actually closer to a homing missile in human form.

One of the fascinating things about anime is the sheer range and variety of stories on offer. Quite a few of them would make marvellous games, but for one reason or another haven't yet been made available on any of the popular game formats (there is one sort-of exception to this, as we'll see). As the tape whirrs and loops in the VCR, you can feel them unfolding round you like a really well-developed roleplay scenario round a great group of characters – but, unfortunately, you can't join in the action.

To that end, then, here are a few reviews of great anime films that would, if someone got round to converting them, make for even better games. All these are under consideration for UK release on the Manga Video label – so soon everyone may be able to see exactly what you're missing – but at present the only way to see them is on the fan circuit. If any of these really catch your imagination, begging letters to your friendly local anime video label might encourage a release that bit faster...

BLACK MAGIC M(ARIO): 66

Based on the manga by Masamune Shirow, this is a classic shoot-'em-up with a twist. A military jet has crashed and two experimental robot seek-and-destroy weapons are missing and activated. The central character, a feisty, determined female reporter, and her wimp sidekick secretly film the military search operation that ends in a bloodbath, destroying one of the robots and most of the unit. The other robot heads into the big city to fulfil its test programming – find and kill its target: the inventor's teenage granddaughter.

BLACK MAGIC M(ARIO): 66: 'GREAT SCIENCE FICTION AND A FAB GAMEPLAY SCENARIO, WELL ANIMATED WITH TERRIFIC CHARACTERS'

Above: The M66 F6 robot meets the M66 F5 model in another *Black Magic M(ario)* scene.

Right: Mellowlink, star of *Armor Hunter Mellowlink*. 'He's dreamy!' reckons our Helen.

At first only looking for the scoop, reporter Sybelle gradually becomes determined that no metal monster is going to kill an innocent kid, and the rest of the story turns into one of the most thrilling seek-and-destroy, run-and-evade sequences ever filmed in any medium as she and the airheaded, but likeable, daughter Felice do their best to stay alive, while the M66 shoots up the town around them. Great science fiction and a fab gameplay scenario, well animated, with terrific characters – it would make a great platform shoot-'em-up.

ARMOR HUNTER MELLOWLINK

This is a 12 part made-for-video series telling the story of the youngest surviving member of a future-war combat infantry platoon wiped out through treachery. Framed for the deaths, he vows vengeance on everyone involved in the murder of his comrades. Armed with a fistful of dogtags (one for each dead man), steely determination and unbelievable luck, he fights his way through a series of battles, always surviving to fight another day.

This simplistic summing-up is unfair to the characterisation, which is excellent, and the writing,

which is fast paced and consistently better than the formula plots usual for this type of story. The episode where our hero takes on a mobile suit, on foot and armed only with what he can carry, in a gladiatorial arena where his target is the No 1 fighter, would make a game in itself – and in the film is real edge-of-the-seat knockabout stuff. Mellowlink himself is an ace hero, 19, cool, redheaded and good on a bike or with a heavy assault rifle, and the sexy lady cardsharp who turns up to assist him is another bonus. The villains are really villainous, the world is suitably scruffy and vicious, and it's terrific.

Mages galore, a heroic and splendid paladin or two, a king noble enough to die for and evil hordes led by a drop-dead sexy superstar in black (plus his underdressed Dark Elf lady) wend their way through a riveting (and also well-animated and beautifully- designed) series of half-hour adventures.

I said at the beginning that there was a sort of exception to the fact that these films haven't been turned into games yet, and that exception is *Record Of Lodoss War*. It's actually currently available as an RPG for NEC's PC Engine CD system. Whether it will appear on Super Famicom cart remains unclear.

Indeed, I've no idea if any of these will ever appear as Super Famicom games, but let's keep hoping, eh?

ANIME CONTACT

Anime UK magazine bi-monthly, £3.50 from all good comic shops – or send an sae to the publishers at 70 Mortimer St, London W1. Island World have a fanclub for their Manga Video label. Write to The Manga Club, 40 St Peters Rd, London W6 9BD.

Just a small section of the cast of *Lodoss War*. The entire series was born out of the creators' love of playing *Dungeons & Dragons*, and has a lot in common with it.

RECORD OF LODOSS WAR: 'A WELL-ANIMATED AND BEAUTIFULLY-DESIGNED ADVENTURE SERIES'

RECORD OF LODOSS WAR

The *Dungeons and Dragons* fan who isn't at home here is blind, deaf, dumb and doesn't like cute elflings. A textbook *Dungeons and Dragons* party – fighter, cleric, magic user, dwarf, thief and aforesaid hypercute elf – enters a textbook dungeon on a textbook wet and gloomy day. However, the party isn't after treasure, but is in fact trying to find a way to save the world from a battle between two opposed gods.

The two main heroes of *Lodoss War*, Deelit (the blonde elf girlie) and the dark haired Pern. As you may have guessed from the picture, the two of them are something of an 'item'.

PUSS-ED OFF A CAT-AFALQUE

(*What? – Ed.*)

BUBSY IN: CLAWS ENCOUNTER OF THE FURRED KIND (ACCOLADE)

Accolade are pretty chuffed with *Bubsy*. It'll be a huge game, with five worlds of three levels each, plus three end levels and a '10 screen by 10 screen final boss'. Blimey. In fact, the game will be so huge that it'll be on a 16 Mbit cart, something only *Street Fighter II* has managed before. Even more impressively, the data will all be compressed (*SFII*'s wasn't), so in truth it'll be even bigger still.

The plot? Bubsy is a cat (which explains all the rather, er, paw puns), and he's on a mission to save the world's yarnball supplies from the invading Woolies. The emphasis is on fast action and humour – wait till you see the bit where you go round a corkscrew and the whole screen spins round. And Bubsy himself has had hours of work put into him. As well as running around and jumping, he can also glide (a bit like Caped Mario) and he's got all sorts of different ways of dying. And he boasts 'the best ever waiting-for-you-to-do-something-with-the-controls sequence'. (We've seen it and we'd have to agree.)

It all looks a bit *Sonic the Hedgehog*gy (which isn't necessarily a bad thing), and Accolade are hoping that *Bubsy* will achieve a similar cult status when the game comes out in about May. Apparently, programmer John Skeel is still desperately designing levels – we'll show you some more soon.

A catalogue of cataclysmic catastrophes in catacombs ca... (*That's quite enough thank you, you're fired – Ed.*)

UNRIVALLED DRIVING FEEL! (APPARENTLY) Nigel Mansell Freewheel controller by Logic 3

For that realistic driving feel, the Nigel Mansell Freewheel controller is just the ticket.

Sick of using joypads on driving games? Want the feel of a real car? Then this new, and unusual, controller could be the answer. It's called the Nigel Mansell Freewheel, and it's due to arrive in the shops for Amiga and other home computers soon – the completely reworked SNES one should be with us by Summer.

Though it looks like a steering wheel, it's not attached to anything (except a couple of wires) – you feel a bit of a prat using it, but apparently you get an unrivalled driving feel. More details on the SNES version as we get them.

FOREIGN GAMES PRICE HIKE

ARE THE DAYS OF THE BARGAIN GREY IMPORT OVER?

You may have noticed a slight change creeping into our import reviews of late, particularly in this issue. It's all to do with the price of carts – quite simply, exchange rate changes over recent months have thrown what used to be a fairly standard £40-£45 price point for imported games all out of whack. Ring around any of the grey importers advertising in this issue and you'll be lucky to find anything priced this low, and certainly not the recent releases. Popular Japanese games are currently selling at anywhere between £50 and £75, and US imports have gone up too, though not quite as much – think around £45-£50 mark for these.

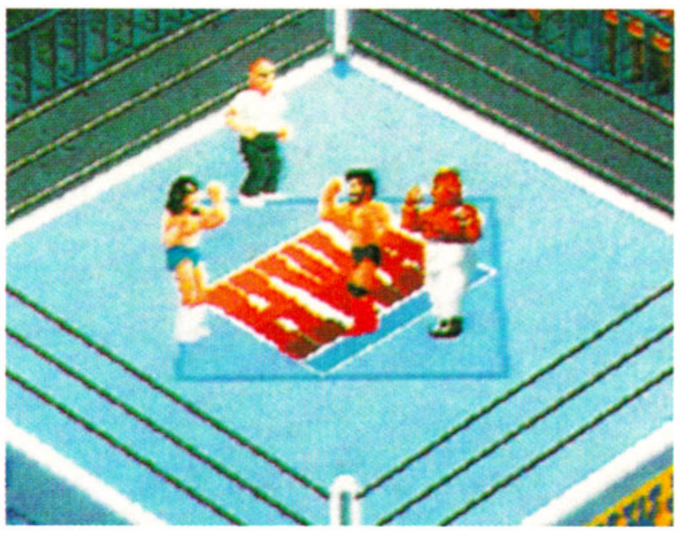
Of course, exchange rates being what they are, these higher prices might not remain a permanent state of affairs, though we can't see any great improvements in the near future. Certainly, throughout the first half of 1993 you're unlikely to find you make any great price savings by buying from grey importers – though, of course, you will still be able to get hold of new games that much quicker. We'll keep you informed on any changes as they happen, but we would recommend phoning around our advertisers to check for accurate prices before you buy.

Fatal Fury **– an expensive game in Japan (9,800 yen), now reflected in UK prices.**

Four-player simultaneous wrestling action!

Super Fire Pro Wrestling 2
by Human

Though the original *Super Fire Pro Wrestling* was a bit of a wash out with anything less than two players, this new version looks better – it's been designed to work with Hudsonsoft's new four-player 'Super Multitap' adaptor, allowing for the most brilliantly dirty of tag matches. The game should be out in Japan by Christmas, so if we can get our hands on both this and the Hudsonsoft four-player adaptor we'll review them side-by-side next issue.



Top: ***Super Fire Pro Wrestling 2*** **developed to work with Hudsonsoft's new four player 'Super Multitap' adaptor (above).**

A SHOOT-'EM UP WITH HANDS?

Pop'n Twin Bee

Konami

You may have seen a cutsy vertically scrolling shoot-'em-up called *Bells & Whistles* appearing in UK game arcades about a year ago. This is actually a Japanese coin-op called *Twin Bee* by another name, a version of which is already out on the PC Engine, with a new version – the *Pop'n Twin Bee* of the title – due out on Super Famicom in Japan in March.

The plot is your bog standard fare – the baddy is a certain Dr Murdock, and his base of operations is called Domburi island – while the graphics are bright and colourful and very sweet. All the original moves from the coin-op are included, as well as a number of new ones – the arms on the front of your Twin Bee space ship (surely a shoot-'em-up first?) can store up energy to release a power-punch, for instance, or can be launched to hit an enemy in mid air. In the two-player mode you can even throw your partner into the baddies using them! Other neat tricks include the console telling you which power-ups you've collected in audio. Watch out for a review of *Pop'n Twin Bee* in *Super Play* soon.

You'll remember the Twin Bee ship from ***Parodius*****, – it was one of three you could choose to play.**

STOP PRESS! STAR FORCE - THE FIRST SUPER FX GAME?

Anybody want to lay bets that this is the first cartridge game to incorporate the new Super FX chip? (See pages 48-51). Set for release at the end of January in Japan and to be unveiled three weeks earlier at the Winter CES in Las Vegas, *Star Force* is a hi-tech 3D polygon shoot-'em-up where the player is in a team of four fighter planes attempting to overthrow the Andorf empire. It certainly sounds like the kind of thing Argonaut (developers of the chip) specialise in. It seems the new chip has boosted the cart price to 9,800 Yen (approx £40). Expect it to cost a lot more on import from February though. More next month.

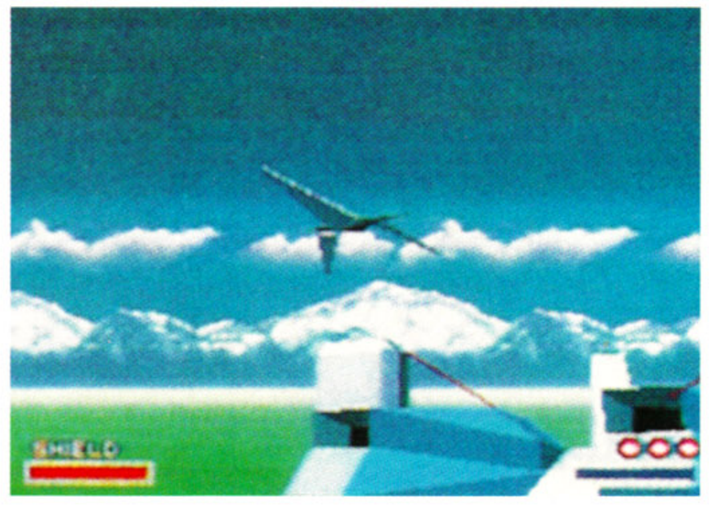


CHART THROB

TOP TENS? WE'VE GOT 'EM

Here's your at-a-glance guide to who's buying what across the globe. *Super Play* hasn't just got its finger on the pulse – it leaves a big red mark when it takes it away again.

OFFICIAL PENGUIN GALLUP UK CHARTS

▲ UP ▼ DOWN ▶ NON MOVER ★ NEW ENTRY

Compiled for *Super Play* by Gallup

1 ▲ **SUPER WWF WRESTLEMANIA** LJN
Wrestling really *does* seem to be more popular here than the biggest selling beat-'em-up. 74%

2 ▼ **STREET FIGHTER II** Capcom
We thought it was unstoppable, but the king of beat-'em-ups seems to be on the way out! 94%

3 ▼ **ZELDA - A LINK TO THE PAST** Nintendo
Another game to suffer from the inexplicable rise in the popularity of wrestling. 93%

4 ★ **KICK OFF** Imagineer
Lots of people have been waiting for this one, and it seems they've all bought it! 52%

5 ▲ **SUPER PROBOTECTOR** Konami
A fabulous game with one player, but team up with a friend and it really motors. 90%

6 ★ **SUPER MARIO WORLD** Nintendo
It used to come with the machine, but now you can buy it separately – and you are! 94%

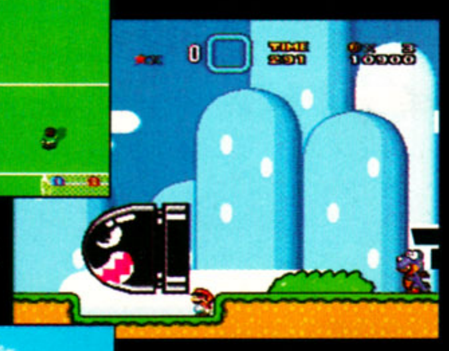
7 ▶ **SUPER SOCCER** Nintendo
One of the first SNES UK releases, and still selling steadily. Yes, it *does* play super soccer. 83%

8 ▼ **JOE & MAC: CAVEMAN NINJA** Elite
An attractive prehistoric platform game aimed at the younger player. 72%

9 ▲ **SUPER TENNIS** Nintendo
It's the best tennis game of all time, and it's back with a vengeance. 92%

10 ▼ **EXHAUST HEAT** Ocean
Still hanging in there, maybe as it's the only Formula 1 game on UK release at present. 69%

Kick Off.



Super Mario World.

Joe & Mac.

F1 Exhaust Heat.

UK IMPORT CHARTS

Compiled for *Super Play* by Console Concepts

1 **SUPER STAR WARS** JVC (Jap/US)
2 **MICKEY'S MAGICAL QUEST** Capcom (Jap/US)
3 **OUT OF THIS WORLD** Interplay(US)
4 **WING COMMANDER** Mindscape (US)
5 **SUPER MARIO KART** Nintendo (Jap/US)
6 **SPIDERMAN & THE X-MEN** Acclaim (US)
7 **FATAL FURY** Takara (Jap)
8 **CHUCK ROCK** Sony Imagesoft (US)
9 **AXELAY** Konami (Jap/US)
10 **DEATH VALLEY RALLY** Sunsoft (US)

JAPANESE CHARTS

Compiled for *Super Play* by Tai Ono

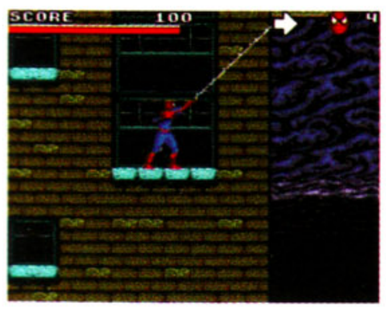
1 **FINAL FANTASY V** Square Soft
2 **SUPER MARIO KART** Nintendo
3 **DRAGON QUEST V** Enix
4 **MICKEY'S MAGICAL QUEST** Capcom
5 **WIZARDRY V** Ascii
6 **STREET FIGHTER II** Capcom
7 **HUMAN GRAND PRIX** Human
8 **LENNUS** Asmik
9 **MAJOR TITLE** Irem
10 **NORTH STAR KEN 6** Toei

AMERICAN CHARTS

Compiled for *Super Play* by Woody Carter

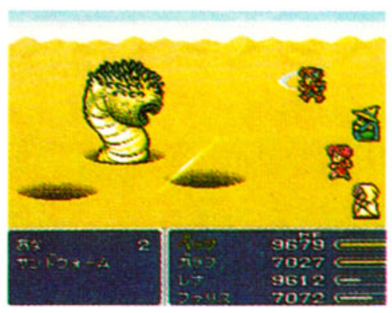
1 **SUPER STAR WARS** JVC
2 **NHLPA HOCKEY** Electronic Arts
3 **MICKEY'S MAGICAL QUEST** Capcom
4 **STREET FIGHTER II** Capcom
5 **DESERT STRIKE** Electronic Arts
6 **SUPER MARIO KART** Nintendo
7 **OUT OF THIS WORLD** Interplay
8 **JOHN MADDEN '93** Electronic Arts
9 **FF: MYSTIC QUEST** Square Soft
10 **MARIO PAINT** Nintendo

Wing Commander.



Spiderman & The X-Men.

The volatility of the import scene is demonstrated by the fact that 8 out of this month's top 10 sellers are new entries. *Super Star Wars* zooms straight in at number 1, though interestingly it's the Japanese version that's selling, as Toys R Us have bought exclusive rights to US version – making it very tricky for British grey importers to get their hands on it. We're pleased to see that *Mickey*'s doing well too (even if it is at the expense of *Mario Kart*), while *Spidey*, *Fatal Fury* and *Road Runner* seem to be riding high on a wave of hype.



Final Fantasy V.

Wizardry V from Ascii.

The number one slot contains no surprises – at least, it won't if you're witness to the massive queues that have accompanied *Final Fantasy V*'s release (see elsewhere in Super Express for more details). *Super Mario Kart* is still performing astonishingly well – it must be selling by the million. And *Mickey* is doing just as well in Japan as he is here in the UK. This chart was put together slightly earlier than our American one, so you won't see *Super Star Wars* appearing here – expect it to make a really big splash next month instead.

Mickey's Magical Quest.

FF: Mystic Quest.

Super Star Wars is doing incredibly well – Toys R Us must be rubbing their hands together with glee. So must Electronic Arts, for that matter, whose three big releases have all gone straight into the top 10. *Mickey's Magical Quest* is the other star performer – a bit of a global success story, that one. With the sole exception of *Mario Paint* – which we'll cover when it earns its UK release next month – all the games in this US chart have earned positive reviews in the pages of *Super Play* – looks like people are spending their money in the right places, at least.

SUPERPLAY Interview

DAVID DARLING, CodeMasters

By Matt Bielby

ONCE AGAIN, ONE OF THE WORLD'S TOP NINTENDO-RELATED PEOPLE STEPS INTO THE LIMELIGHT...

YOU
COUPLES
And father came too
When whiz-kids Richard and David Darling hit the jackpot with their computer games company, one of the first people on their payroll was their dad Jim.

The Game Genie (far left) and the Codies make it into *You* magazine.

David Darling, along with brother Richard, runs one of Britain's most successful software houses – CodeMasters, traditionally purveyors of fine budget-priced games for the Spectrum, the Amiga, etc. But now at least half the company is devoted to developing the Game Genie, a Nintendo add-on that allows you to customise the games you own. A gigantic toyshop hit in the US, it looks set to succeed over here...

David Darling, one of the directors of CodeMasters. Those envious of such a young person being so very rich will be pleased to hear this photo was taken a few years ago. What they *won't* be so happy about is that he still looks the same today..!

Q First off, David, where did the idea for the Game Genie come from?

A What happened was that a few years ago I went with Richard and a guy here called Ted Carron to one of the Las Vegas Computer Entertainment Shows, where we realised just how big Nintendo was over there. When we came back we were thinking 'right, we've got to somehow get into this'. So we tried to come up with a game concept that would appeal to absolutely everybody – we thought that to achieve this you'd have to give the game loads of options so people could make it as hard or as easy as they liked. This, in turn, got us thinking about how neat it would be if we could modify *every* game like that, but we thought it wasn't possible, because, of course, with Nintendo games being on cartridge, you can't change the ROM. We were wrong, of course – it *is* possible. You don't have to change the ROM, you just have to fool it a bit.

Q How long did development take?

A About six months for the initial NES version, I guess. Doing hardware was a new thing for us, and we had to get in quite a few new people – and lots of new equipment! – to make a go of it.

Q Did you ever talk to Nintendo about whether they'd support the product?

A To be honest, when we went to that first CES, we tried to talk Nintendo about doing games for them, but they gave us the cold shoulder because we hadn't booked an appointment. After that we just saw doing it without them as a challenge, I think. Galoob, the big American toy company that manufactures and distributes the Game Genie over in America, talked to Nintendo Of America about getting an official licence for the product, but for whatever reason it never happened. Which didn't bother us at all.

Q How big a deal is the Game Genie to Galoob in America?

A It's very, very important to them. I don't have any current figures for Galoob, but I know that a couple of year's ago they had a turnover of $270 million, so they're a pretty large company. Their biggest thing by far has traditionally been Micro Machines, which are tiny model cars, but Game Genie is now at least as important. They've sold 2.5 million units, I believe, which is an awful lot. Of course, those are mainly the NES version – the Super Nintendo model has only just come out in the States, so it's too early to say just how that's gone down.

Q Nintendo sued you, didn't they?

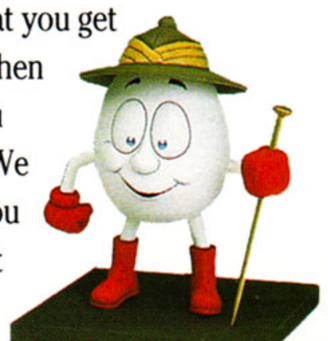
A Oh yeah. They sued Galoob for 'contributing to copyright infringement'. They successfully got an injunction preventing Galoob from selling the cartridges, but, in court, their case – which was basically that by changing the number of lives or whatever in a game you change its appearance, and thus infringe their copyright – fell through. Using their argument, playing a game on a black and white TV changes the appearance, and thus infringes copyright, which clearly wasn't on.

Q How about Action Replay. They're your rivals over here. Is it the same in the States?

A They do sell Action Replays in America, but Sega sued them! They're really a tiny part of the market compared to Game Genie. We got there first, and have completely out-marketed them.

Q Doesn't the fact that Action Replay allows you to create your own codes, as opposed to having to phone you for them, give them an advantage?

A I don't see that at all. Action Replay is a more limited device than Game Genie. It can allow you to have infinite lives, keep a full energy bar etc, but it won't let you modify the game in other ways. We can give you super jumps, for instance – they can't. We also believe in giving an after sales service, so that you get a massive list of codes for about 50 games when you first buy the cartridge, then we send you updated books when new games come out. We also run a phone service for new codes as you buy new games. Our basic philosophy is that we do all the hard work for you!!



New. For your SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM New. For your SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM New. For your

TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES IV
TURTLES IN TIME™

TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES IV
TURTLES IN TIME
KONAMI
Gehen Sie mit auf Shredders grauenvolle Zeitreise. Direkt von dem zweiten Spielhallenhit non-stop zu Ihnen nach Hause. Dies ist Konamis heißestes Turtles-Spiel aller Zeiten!
SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
PAL VERSION
LICENSED BY Nintendo

The ever villainous Shredder has sent one of his evil androids to steal the Statue of Liberty. The turtles have to defeat Shredder and rescue Lady Liberty from his evil clutches in six huge levels of Arcade Action. As they attempt to put an end to Shredder he knocks everyone into an activated Matrix Translocation Beam sending everyone hurtling back through time. Can the turtles defeat the host of historic hooligans as they fight their way back to 1992, to the final showdown with Shredder.

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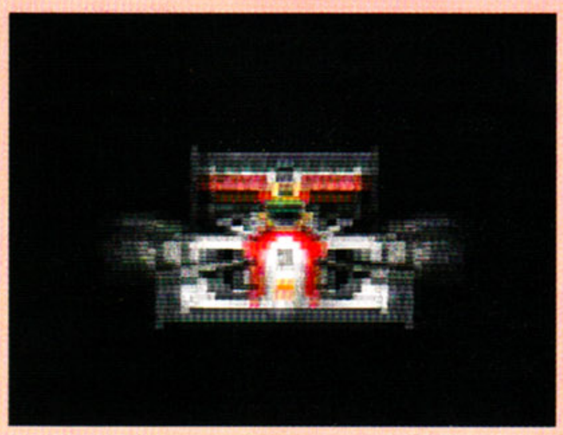
HUMAN GRAND PRIX

Why's that chap on the cover's looking so pleased? Here's your answer – *Human*'s attempt to do for F1 racing what they did for football with *Super Soccer*. How does it handle?

The game's a split-screen job. In one-player mode, the top window shows the view behind your car.

In two-player mode, however, it looks like this. Those windows are very narrow, you may be thinking, and yes, they are – we don't fancy its chances on UK machines with the playing area squashed up *even* more! However, as it stands, on a Japanese Super Famicom, you get used to it quite quickly.



Vroom! The intro is great – lots of cars zooming out of the screen at you.

Uh-oh! Looks like the player at the top is going the wrong way round the track!

Pile up city! Hitting other cars, especially at the start, is dead easy!

Needless to say, Schumacher wasn't in the hands of any of the *Super Play* team.

THE MECHANICS OF THE THING

SETTING UP

Life wouldn't be the same if you couldn't tweak your car just before the race. Happily, in *Human Grand Prix*, you can do just that.

The sorts of things you can adjust are: manual or automatic transmission (automatic is wise); the amount of downforce the front spoiler produces (more downforce equals better roadholding but a lower top speed); how hard your suspension is; and how effective your brakes are.

Here, too, is where you can adjust the sensitivity of the steering, although you can't actually change the way it works (see later). And you can save your settings to battery backed-up memory for later.

You can spend ages finding the best race-winner.

THE PITS

During the race you can pull into the pits – the resulting sequence is almost on a par with *Exhaust Heat*'s.

Player 1's car needs some urgent attention.

But how do you decide when to make a pitstop, or when to drive on by? Well, if you take a look at the right side of your instrument panel you'll see a row of lights which turn red as your car suffers damage.

In this case, it seems that Player 1 (at the bottom) is really in trouble. His front wing is the most pressing problem – it's been taking a pounding. But his brakes, tyres and suspension are all on the way out, too.

Incidentally, see if you can guess who Player 1 actually is.

Japanese Release

Game: Human Grand Prix
Publisher: Human
Developer: In-house
Price: Approx. £50-£60
Release: Out now
Players: 1 or 2 simultaneous
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit + BB

Like all the best racing games, you get some decent tunnel sequences. The courses are generally very realistic feeling representations of real F1 tracks.

On the Monaco GP course you get to see the sea as you zoom past. Pretty, isn't it?

The final result, and look who got the best lap time and won the race. That Berger, he's an amateur by comparison.

Picking between the cars can be a real problem – they all look so good. However, because it's got a V12 rather than a V10, and because I like the colour scheme, I think I'll go for the nice red-and-white one at the top.

Okay, we're going for the South African Grand Prix at Kyalami, the course record has been flashed up, and now all I've got to decide is whether I want wet or dry weather. (I figure it's bound to be sunny down there, so let's go for 'wet' just to be difficult, eh?)

Okay, we're on the starting grid, and my car seems to have switched from the McLaren I picked in the first picture to the Williams I had in the second to this Ferrari for some reason. (*Crap screen grabbing, perhaps? - Ed.*) As you can see, I'm well back in the field too (in last place, in fact), which makes my chance of victory slight at best. Still, let's see what we can do, eh?

WEIRDO STEERING!

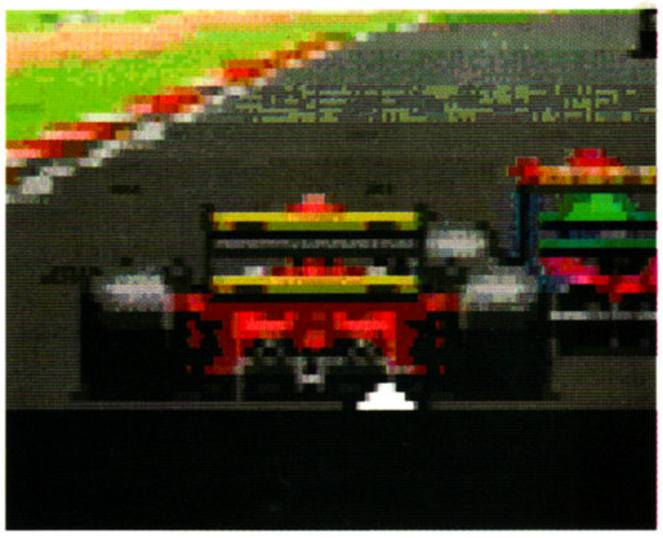
Your questions on steering answered.

STEERING'S STEERING, ISN'T IT?

Well, sort of. In most driving games, you press Left and the car steers left, you take your finger off Left and the car straightens out. And the same goes for Right. It sounds straightforward enough, but there's actually a problem. There's no way of actually saying *how much* 'left' you want. It's all or nothing. Can you imagine trying to drive a real car where the steering wheel only had three positions: hard left, hard right and in-the-middle?

SO WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE?

Machines like PCs work with analogue joysticks. These don't just send a 'left' signal to the computer. Instead they elaborate a little: 'left just a tiny bit', 'left a sort of middling amount', 'incredibly hard left' – that sort of thing. A similar effect can be achieved on the Amiga or Atari ST using a mouse, only it doesn't work as well. (As players of things like the otherwise fab *Formula 1 Grand Prix* can probably attest.)



This little white arrow is crucial – it shows the exact angle your car is steering at, and needs constant adjustment throughout the game.

AND HUMAN GRAND PRIX?

The Super Nintendo doesn't work with an analogue joystick, and mice are thin on the ground. So *Human Grand Prix* has to improvise. The little white arrow at the bottom of the screen indicates the position of the steering wheel. If, say, you wanted to move from the left side of the track to the right, you'd press Right until the arrow moved right a bit, and then release it. When the car's in the right place, you'd press Left until the arrow's moved back to the middle again. If you wanted to take a sharp corner, you'd do the same sort of thing but you'd move the arrow right over to the far right.

IT SOUNDS LIKE A COMPLETE NIGHTMARE

Erm, well it is a bit. To start off with, at least. (And our explanation probably doesn't help too much either.) We reckon that for your first few races you'll be weaving about all over the place, though you'll eventually get the hang of it, more or less. (You'll still have to concentrate far harder than you would in most driving games though.) For many people, however, it never feels quite right. For that reason, some sort of self-centring option might help, or – better still – an option to revert to a more normal steering system. (Sorry to go on about it, but, after all, *Mario Kart* seems to manage fine without all this kerfuffle.)

CARS AND COURSES

The McLaren, sponsored by top ciggie maker Marlboro, and a good car. Not as good as...

...the all-conquering Williams, though. If you want an edge, this is the one to go for.

Erm... (Help!) This is a Footwork, I think, and it's one of the weediest cars you could pick.

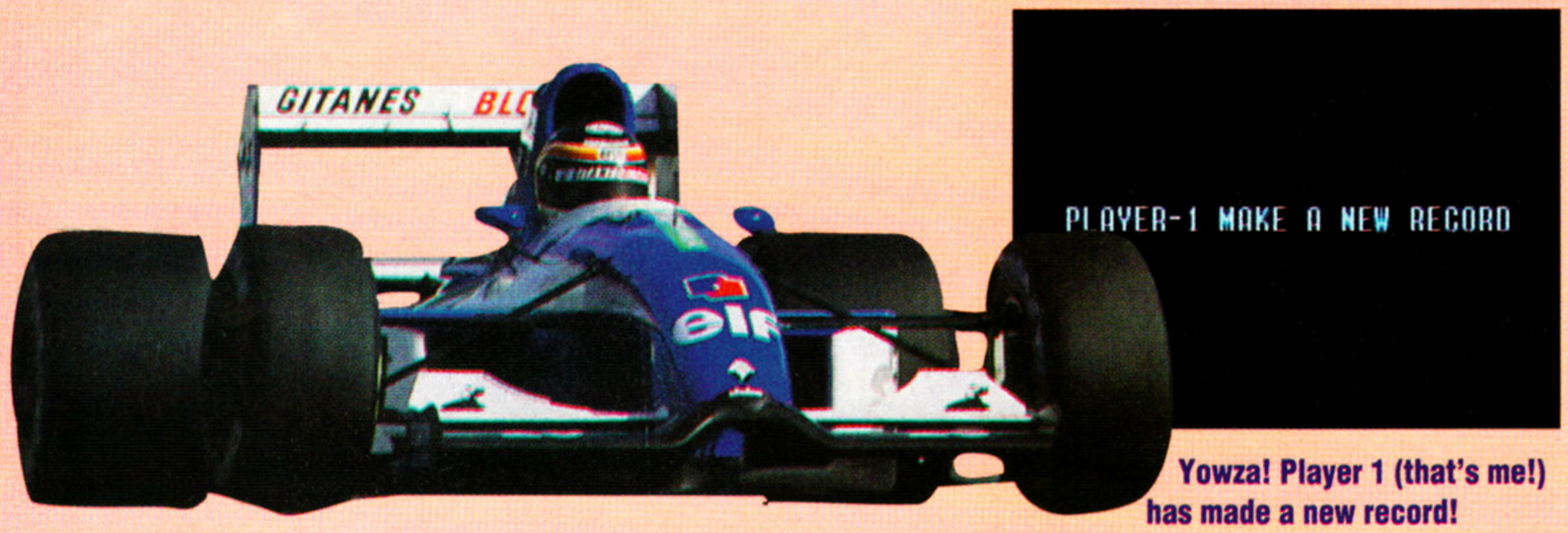
It's not quite as weedy as this, the Venturi, though. It's crap! Avoid like the plague.

The Mexican GP – it's got a couple of good straights, plus a good lot of wiggly bits.

Brazil, where you get a couple of bends where you almost double back on yourself. Slow down!

Spain – rather fittingly shaped like the head of a bull, complete with horns. (*Sacked! – Ed.*)

The San Marino GP, which looks more like Lake Windemere. (*I thought I just sacked you – Ed.*)



Yowza! Player 1 (that's me!) has made a new record!

THE NOT-SO-STIFF COMPETITION

F-1 EXHAUST HEAT
(Ocean)

I reviewed this in issue 2, so I'm uniquely well-placed when it comes to comparing it to *Human Grand Prix*. The main difference is that *Exhaust Heat* is one-player only, which takes a lot of the fun out of it. And its graphics aren't nearly as good as *Human*'s, somehow managing to use Mode 7 and still look rubbish. But when you get into it it plays quite well, even if it is a bit easy to win all the time. 69%

AGURI SUZUKI F1 SUPER DRIVING
(LOZC)

Concept-wise this is very similar to *Human*. It's got a split-screen two-player mode, and has incredibly fast graphics. In fact, if anything the graphics are even better than *Human*'s – there are

bridges over the road and tunnels to drive through, something unheard of in Mode 7. But (but!) the view of the road ahead is so restricted that it's almost impossible to anticipate corners, making the game very tough even when you've got to know the courses. Out in the UK 'soon'. 72%

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Watch out for *Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix* (below), from Gremlin, coming in a month or two, and *Super F-1 Hero* which we'll hopefully be taking a better look at in our next issue.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

The one thing the Super Nintendo lacks at the moment is a really, really good Formula 1 racing game – something along the lines of *Formula 1 Grand Prix* on the Amiga. Writing it should – you'd think – just be a case of taking *F-Zero*, changing the graphics a bit and giving it a more Earth-based feel. But for some inexplicable reason no-one's done it yet. They've tried, but somehow it always seems to go horribly wrong. *Exhaust Heat* is fine except for the silly graphics and *Aguri Suzuki* would be great if you could only see corners coming up properly. Can *Human Grand Prix* do any better?

Graphically it hits the nail on the head. The cars are well integrated with the track (much better than *Exhaust Heat*'s), which helps to give the game a bit of conviction. And there's even an attempt to incorporate hills into the courses. The only snag is the rather narrow display area – on a UK SNES it's like looking through a letter-box. And the sound isn't exactly brilliant. The engine noise is fine – really throaty, and reminiscent of my own Montego – but there aren't any skidding effects. That's a shame, as often the only indication that you've gone into a skid is that you're sitting by the road picking grass out of your teeth.

And – yes! – you can actually see corners coming up in time to do something about them too. This is something it's difficult to appreciate the significance of until you've struggled with a game like *Aguri Suzuki* or *F1 Circus*. The game is still quite difficult, though – the computer-controlled cars pose quite a challenge – but at least it's in an honest, above-board way. And even if you do start getting a bit good at it, there's always the added bonus of a two-player option.

It all sounds too good to be true. What's the catch? Well, it's the controls. I've explained elsewhere on these pages how they work, and what's so horrible about them, so I won't go through it all again. After a few hours' play they do begin to make sense, but it really would have been nice to have had a 'normal steering' option.

However, despite that one small flaw, *Human Grand Prix* is a terrific game – the best Formula 1 game on the Super Nintendo, in fact.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
84%	69%	80%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	82%
85%		

VERDICT: A really smart Formula 1 game with the huge advantage of a two-player mode. It's a shame about the controls though: they'll drive you rou... (*Grr! – Ed.*)

Thanks to DMC Consoles, (0225) 448253, for lending us this cart.

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There's a mini *Star Wars* revival on right now, bringing with it lots of good things – books, a fab comic, one brilliant PC game (*X-Wing*) and this, not only the best film game on the SNES, but a real contender for the best of its type on any system.

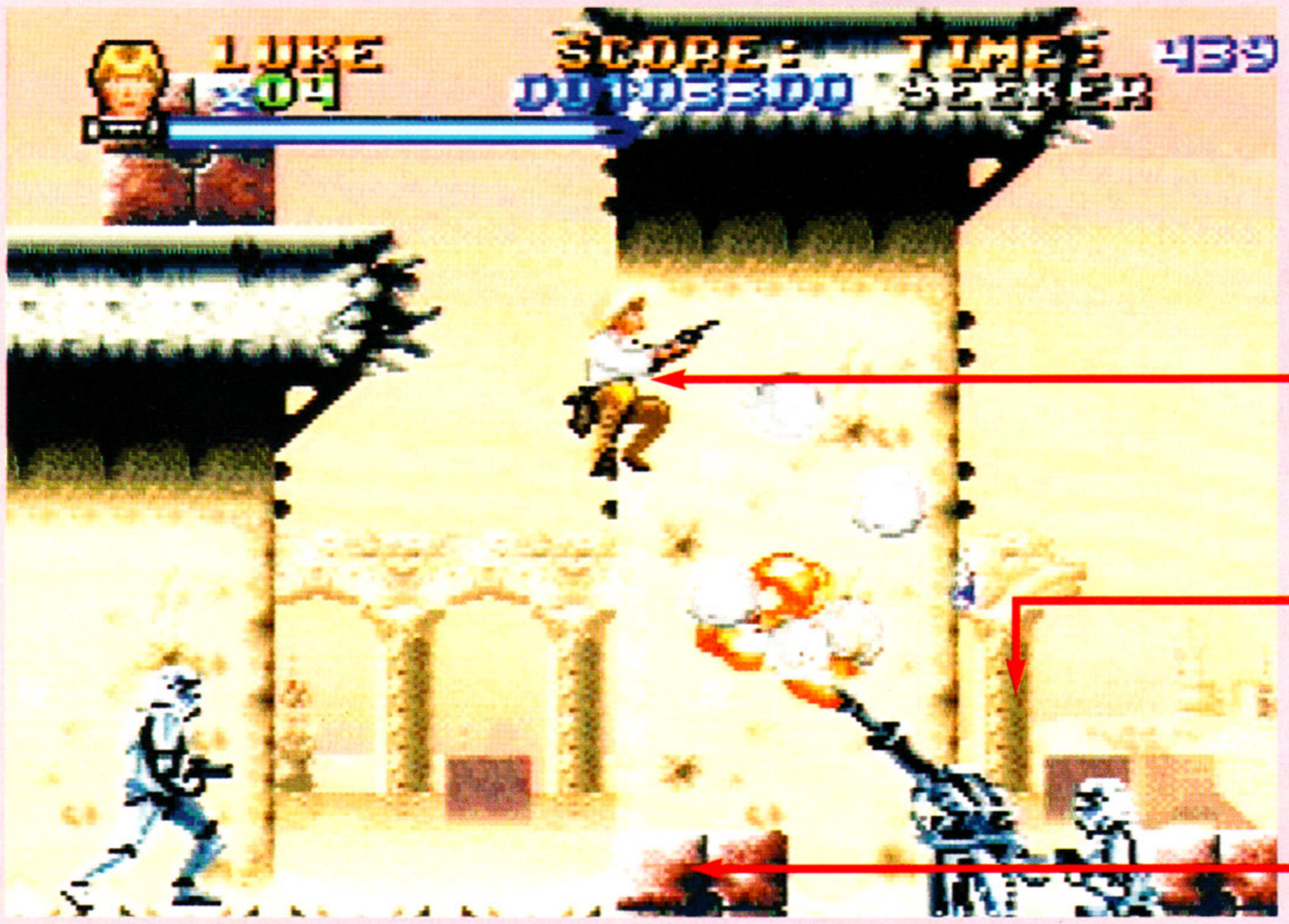
SUPER STAR WARS

US Release

Game: Super Star Wars
Publisher: Lucas Arts/JVC
Developer: Sculpture Software
Price: £50-75
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

A LONG TIME AGO, IN A GALAXY, FAR, FAR AWAY...

Here's a selection of the (sometimes animated) between level sequences, which fill in gaps in the plot, to get you in the mood...



MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU

Though the game takes place over 15 sections, each with its own flavour, this is basically a platform-game-with-bits-tacked-on. As such, most of the sections have loads in common. Things like these, for instance. (By the way, at no point during the game do we recommend closing your eyes and allowing 'The Force' to guide your movements. It don't work.)

The hero. This one's Luke Skywalker, and you can play him throughout the game if you choose, though later sections allow you to pick either rogue space pilot Han Solo or his savage Wookie pal Chewbacca instead.

A villain direct from the film. This one's an Imperial Storm Trooper, though you get Jawas, Sand People, and so on too. (You also get a number of 'made up' villains, often so well thought out that you figure they may well have appeared in the first draft of the film, but ended up somewhere on the cutting room floor.)

Smash up these box thingies (and various other bits of landscape you come across in the game) and they'll often reveal time bonuses, blaster power-ups etc. Well worth having, I should say.

SO, WHO D'YOU FANCY?

Though in the early levels of the game you have to play Luke Skywalker, later levels offer the choice of first Chewbacca, then Han Solo as well. All three characters look exactly as you'd expect them to, and have their own distinctive moves too, making for a very satisfying gameplaying experience.

STAGE 1: THE DESERTS OF TATOOINE

The game kicks off with a fairly simple level, though it provides a good taster for the things to come. You play Luke, running along through the Tatooine desert with a blaster or light sabre in hand (you get to swap any time you feel like it). There are no platforms as such, though sporadic quicksand bogs hinder your progress, while baddies include strange bat-like birds, giant scorpions, and things that look suspiciously like giant Gremlins crossed with the Alien. The boss (seen here) announces himself as a Sarlaa Pit Monster, but proves reasonably easy to kill.

STAGE 2: THE LANDSPEEDER

In the between-level sequence you'd met C3PO, and joined him on a mission to rescue R2D2 from the Jawas. So it's into your landspeeder for a 3D into-the-screen shoot-'em-up-cum-driving game affair. You've got to kill a certain number of jet-bike mounted Sand People and other baddies as you race towards the Jawa's Sandcrawler.

STAGE 3: CLIMBING THE SANDCRAWLER

It's only with level three, and your arrival at the Sandcrawler, that the game *really* starts to show what it's made of. The sheer metal sides of this mobile fortress are a mass of gun emplacements, homicidal Jawas (small guys in heavy cloaks), hostile defense droids and moving platforms – split second timing is required for your jumps if you're to make it to the top, as is a very itchy trigger finger. On the top (inset) you'll find a handful of extra gun turrets to get rid of, then an arrow pointing your way inside. Better get going, hadn't you?

STAGE 4: INSIDE THE SANDCRAWLER

Things keep up the pace inside too. The 'crawler has corridors and airshafts to rush through, doors to shoot out, electrical forcefields to avoid and the occasional platform to jump. At the end of all this you should reach R2D2, and learn the nature of your real mission – to rescue Princess Leia, and join the noble fight against the evil Empire!

STAGE 5: LAND OF THE SANDPEOPLE

This desert level features both Jawas and hordes of the bigger Sand People to battle, and has a particularly evil platform section that can be murder to complete. Not only do some of these floating rock platforms drop away under your feet, threatening to plunge you to your doom, but a series of mad birds dive-bomb Luke. Shooting them's little good either – a new one appears each time!

STAGE 6: LAND OF THE BANTHAS

This one's a slightly shorter stage, one that at first seems to be a complete retread of the Sand People level, then mutates into a series of fights against giant Banthas (massive, elephant-like mammoth creatures ridden by the Sand People – see pic left), before throwing you into a series of caves and putting you against a 'giant mutant womprat' (see pic right) – a creature alluded to in the film, if I remember correctly, but never actually seen. Well, now you *can* see it, and – ugly though it may be – it isn't particularly tricky to kill. (Phew.)

STAGE 7: HEADING FOR MOS EISLEY

After the womprat, its back into your landspeeder for a second driving level, this one featuring a space port (the Mos Eisley of the title) in the distance for you to race towards, instead of a Sandcrawler, but otherwise remaining suspiciously similar to the driving sequence you've already done. (Your 'speeder hasn't had a paint job in this shot, by the way – it's just been hit by a Jawa's bomb!)

STAGE 8: MOS EISLEY SPACE PORT

At last! The distinctive white-armoured imperial storm troopers, such a major image from the film, make their first (but by no means last) appearance, as do some large (and thankfully docile) dinosaurs. Anyway, various shoot outs and (yep) platform leapings later, we come across Chewbacca, the large (and hairy) Wookie, who'll be one of your pilots off this rather too hostile world.

STAGE 9: THE CANTINA FIGHT

You'll remember this – the fab sequence that takes place in a futuristic jazz bar. The game recreates it very accurately, with a great rendition of the brilliant cantina music,

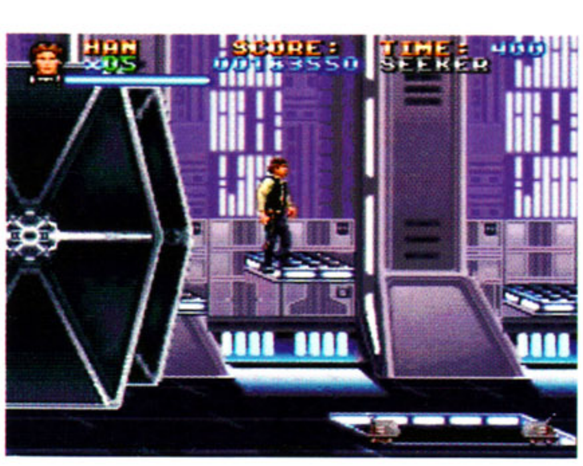
plus an assortment of bad guys based on aliens from the film. Gameplay-wise, though, it's unspectacular – just a linear shoot-'em-up. (You can play Luke or Chewie, by the way.)

STAGE 10: ESCAPE FROM MOS EISLEY

At the end of the previous level you met Han Solo, so now you've a choice of three heroes to play, a situation that continues for the remainder of the platform levels in the game.

The plan is to get to the Millennium Falcon and flee the planet, dodging storm troopers, giant claws, maintainance droids, and a 'Hover Combat Carrier' (see right) on the way.

STAGE 11: DEATH STAR HANGER BAY



Another Luke, Han or Chewie job, and one of the cleverest sections of the entire game. Again, this doesn't appear in the film *as such*, but uses lots of elements from the movie. Basically, you appear to be walking down the Imperial TIE fighter runway, with (almost) screen-high fighters zooming past you. There are occasional holes in the ground that you've got to jump over, but timing is crucial – jump as a TIE flies past and the draft it creates is liable to sweep you down the hole. Similarly, watch for tiny messenger droids which do their best to push you down the holes too. Boss is an ED 209 lookalike (see left).

STAGE 12: DEATH STAR CORRIDORS

Packed with spider-like robots, and finished off by a Detention Guard boss, this level leads you straight to where the captured Princess Leia (looking more sulty than she ever did in the film in the still end-of-level screen) is just itching to be rescued. Giant crushing devices have to be avoided, assorted platforms negotiated and various other bad guys blown up as you fight your way through the bowels of the space ship. (The bit where our heroes are caught in a garbage crusher is, unfortunately, not included.)

STAGE 13: TRACTOR BEAM CORE

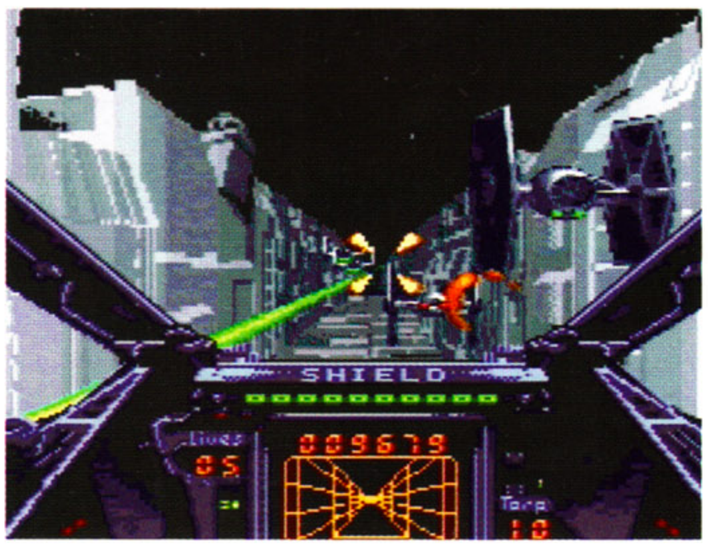
Your final mission on board the Death Star is to disable the tractor beam that's preventing the Millennium Falcon from escaping. This involves a ride up an almost completely vertical level, leaping from rising platform to rising platform, taking out storm troopers on the way. (It's a sort of amalgamation of the bit in the film where Luke swings across the big gap, and the bit where Obi Wan actually *does* disable the tractor beam.) Anyway, blast out the core at the top and you should be home free. This is, by the way, the last of the platform levels – it's (sadly) downhill from here.

STAGE 14: ATTACK ON THE DEATH STAR

Quickly skipping past the escape from the Death Star, our heroes are now at the Rebel base, and Luke is planning to take part in a daring raid on the battle station. This level is basically exactly the same as the earlier landspeeder ones, but with completely different graphics – you're now in an X-wing fighter, flying over the surface of the giant man-made planet, shooting out a set number of attacking TIE fighters and fixed towers. Though this looks great in the screenshots, it's less than successful in real life, giving disappointingly little real impression of speed.

STAGE 15: THE TRENCH

This is it, the game's climax, and a completely different sort of level altogether. Now you're actually inside the cockpit of an X-wing fighter, flying down a narrow canyon on the Death Star's surface – at the end lies the station's one weak point, an exhaust duct down which you hope to lob a few well placed proton torpedos, beginning a chain reaction that will destroy the entire thing. First, however, there's the small matter of a whole horde of imperial TIE fighters – including one flown by arch-baddy Darth Vader himself – to deal with...



GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

'Good, bad or ugly?', this bit's called, so I'll make one thing clear now – there's nothing bad, and little that's ugly, about *Super Star Wars*. This is, simply, one of the best – if not *the* best – film-based games ever, so bear that in mind when I start carping later on. It's not that the game's no good, just that there are a few easy ways in which it could have been made even better.

One great thing about *Super Star Wars* is that it takes the all-but-discredited idea that you can make a film game out of a whole load of different, stylistically unconnected sections – and makes it work. Most other good film titles have been along the lines of Ocean's *Addams Family* – massive platform extravaganzas that use characters and settings from the movie, but have precious little else to do with it.

Super Star Wars, on the other hand, makes it its task to tell the story of the film almost exactly. Okay, so your choice of sprites is limited to only three (Luke, Han or Chewie), and it comes as some surprise that Darth Vader rarely appears in 15 levels, but most of the film sequences you'll remember are here. There's the landspeeder ride through the desert, the final Battle Of Britain-style assault on the Death Star, the rescue of Princess Leia, even the wonderful cantina sequence – and most of those great moments not included are shown in a series of stunning between-level animations.

The other great thing about it all is that it looks exactly as a *Star Wars* game *should* look. The problem with many film licences is that either a) the graphic artist simply isn't very good, b) the game has to be put together while the film's still in production, so the artist has no real idea of what he's meant to be aiming for, or c) the game company has bought the rights to the characters, but not to the actors who play them. So they have to make the heroes look nothing like they do in the film (see Ocean's upcoming *Lethal Weapon*, for instance, as an example). The joy of *Super Star Wars* being put together by the software division of the film's producers, Lucasfilm, is that b) and c) simply don't come into play, leaving only the talent of the graphic artist to worry about. And. let me tell you now, the guy they've got here is *good*.

What you won't see from the screen grabs is the music, for instance, which is a shame. It's magnificent, reproducing the atmosphere and excitement of the movie well. It's almost good enough to justify the price of the game on its own.

One of the other common faults of film games is that they're rushed, often ending up far too short and easy. Not so here – these 15 levels vary in difficulty considerably, it's true, but the toughest of them are rock hard. I doubt if anyone's going to feel ripped off on completing it, that's for sure.

All of which, as I hope I've made clear, makes for a very good game indeed – and if not a must-buy, then almost one.

However, as I pointed out at the beginning, there *are* faults. As this is mainly a platform game, it's unfair to penalise it for some ropy flying sections, but the last two in particular could be better – their limited controlability and sense of speed are disappointing after working your way this far through the game. The one big fault, though, is that old SNES bugbear of slow-down – something you'd hope they would have sorted by now. Some of the platform sections, in particular, almost grind to a halt when lots of characters walk on screen.

But that's it. This is simply an excellent, and great value, game, based on a fab movie. Roll on Lucasfilm's *Empire Strikes Back* and *Return Of The Jedi* (but let's hope they get their slow-down problems sorted out by then).

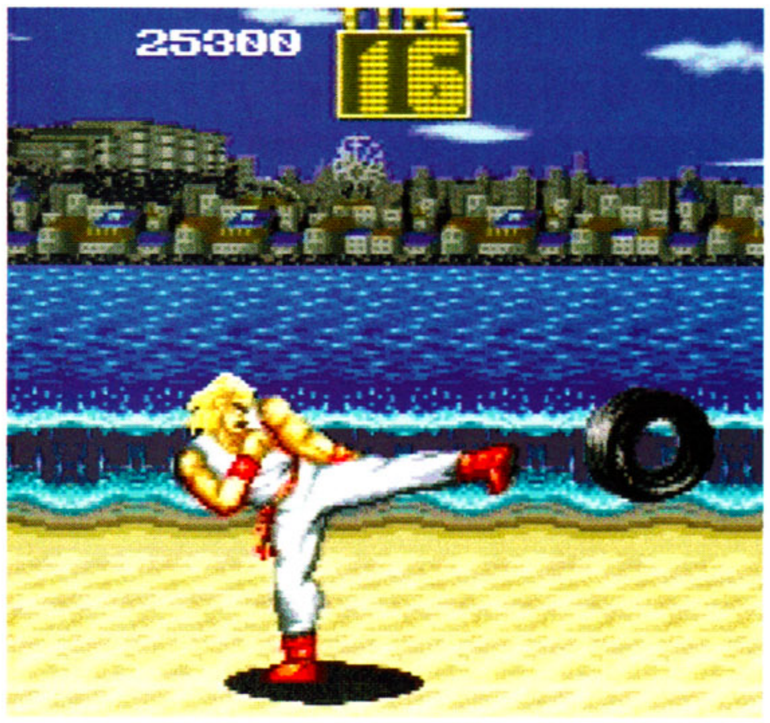
● Matt Bielby

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
88%	91%	87%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	89%
86%		

VERDICT: Lots of levels, brilliant graphics, incredible music and a well-paced difficulty curve make this most accurate of film conversions one of the best. It's bugged by slow-down on occasion (but not enough to spoil it).

FATAL FURY

It had to happen – with the success of *Street Fighter II*, it was inevitable that pretenders to the throne would soon appear. This issue is packed with 'em, but *Fatal Fury* is first up. So, how does it fare?



The game has a bonus section, but unfortunately it's a little bit crap – just kick the tyres out of your way.

It's dead easy, too. I got a perfect without really trying.

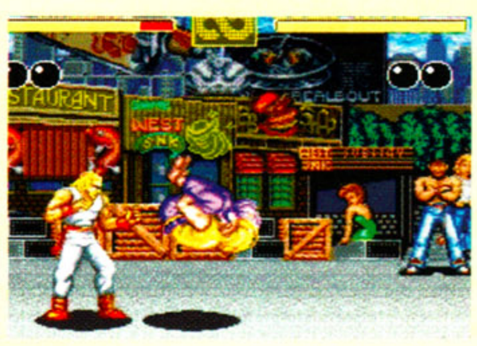
Geese Howard, the big boss character, does his traditional threatening bit. (Pity it's all in Japanese.)

Japanese Release

Game: Fatal Fury: King of Fighters (Japanese version: Legend of the Hungry Wolf: The Battle of Destiny)
Publisher: Takara
Developer: In-house (original SNK)
Price: Approx. £50-75
Release: Out now
Players: 1 or 2
Cart ROM: 12 Mbit

TAKING OUT THE BADDIES

While you have four special moves at your disposal – along with the usual kick/punch/jump moves – the eight baddies you come across during the game have only two. Here's a brief look at the sort of things you can expect...

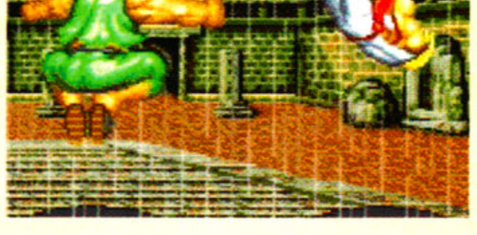


THE DUCK KING
Er, duck! The Duck King performs this nasty spin jump thing at you, but if you repeatedly kick at him, he's a bit stuffed and you should beat him fairly easily.

MICHAEL MAX
The obligatory Mike Tyson-lookalike of the game, Michael Max packs a pretty mean punch. He can also throw out small whirlwinds at you, which can easily sweep you off your feet. Watch out for them!

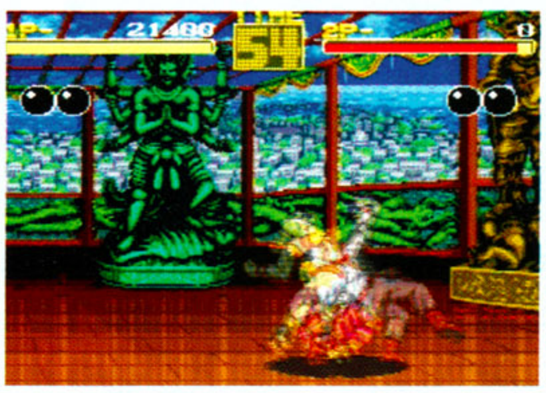
TUNG FU RUE
When you first see this guy you think 'no problem.' Well, he does look a bit crap and easy to beat, doesn't he? Of course, you couldn't be much more wrong...

Here's one reason – he doesn't stay small and wimpish for very long, as this screen-shot proves. Time to take some fairly serious evasive action...



Or this might happen. Yikes!

LUSH LOOKING OR WHAT?



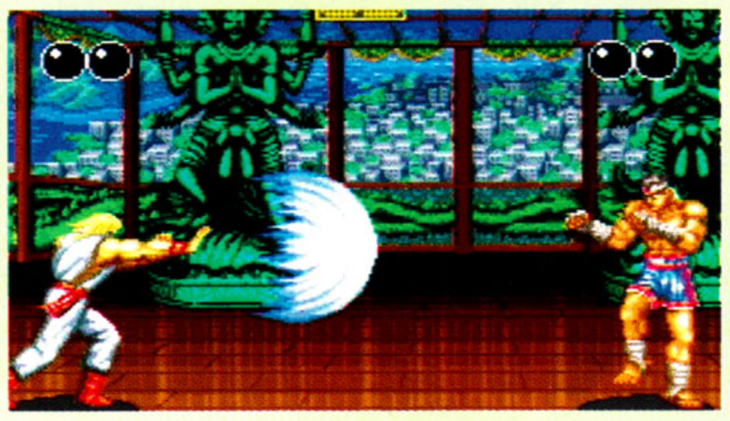
These backdrops might look perfectly fine to you, but there's quite a lot missing that was there in the original Neo Geo version. The Neo Geo's train thundering past on section one would have been nice, for instance, although (of course) this sort of thing makes sod all difference to the gameplay. More perplexing is the introduction of a very linear play area. On the Neo Geo the screen used to be divided into two planes, which you could jump between at will (in and out of the screen, as it were) – a novel complicating factor that would have added much to the gameplay here. Not only would it have been original (for the SNES, at least), it would have given *Fatal Fury* something major to distinguish it from the likes of Street *Fighter II*.

YES, IT'S THOSE TRADITIONAL SPECIAL MOVES IN FULL...

To be honest, I'm not quite sure what this special move is used for – or, indeed, how you do it. Looks like it might be a little bit deadly if you know what to do with it, though, doesn't it?

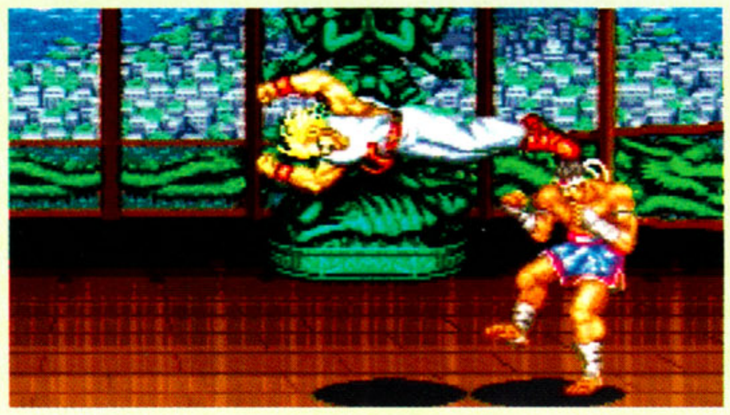
Joe lets one rip. A flaming power kick that is, or whatever you want to call it. *Fatal Fury* has less refined gameplay than *SFII* when it comes to the special moves and strategies.

This one's a little more obvious, and – as far as I'm concerned – far more effective. It's actually one of the more attainable special moves – accessing it takes exactly the same joypad movement as Ryu's fireball in *Street Fighter II*.

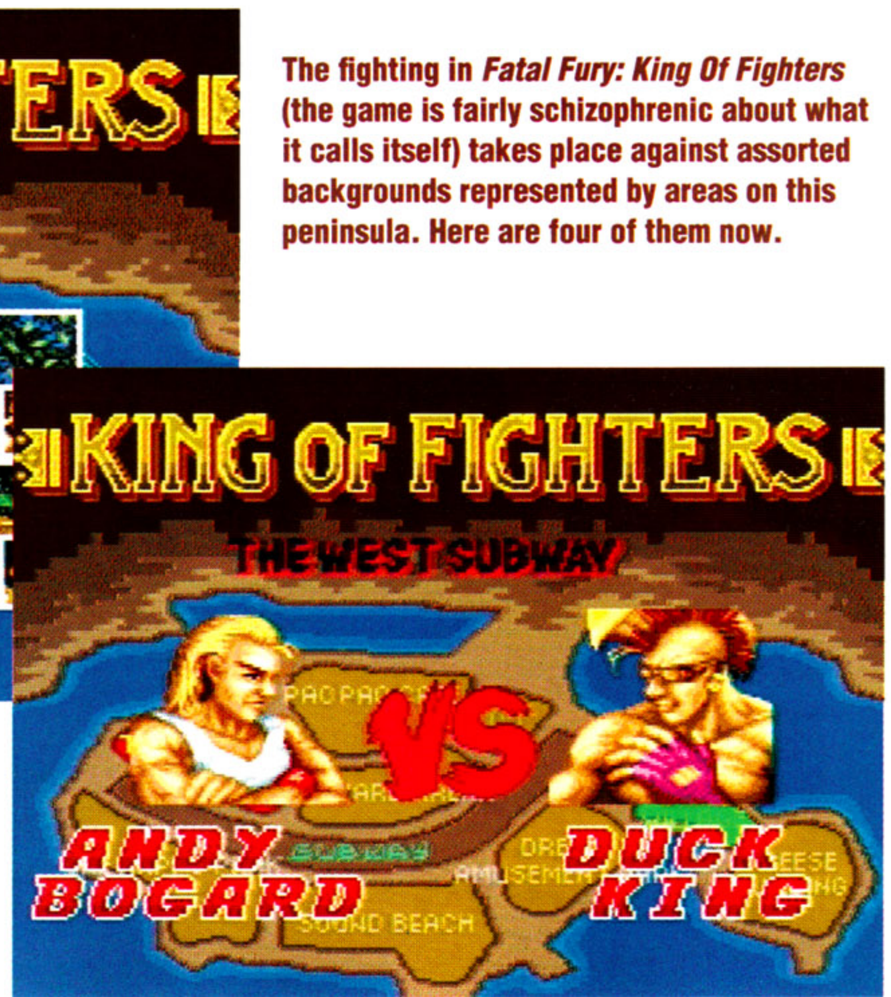


This move gets them every time – *if* you can actually get it to work. All you have to do is press down, left, then up, right and Y in between. (Having three hands helps.) If you thought accessing the special moves in *SFII* was hard, you ain't seen nothing yet.

Looks like we've stopped for a spot of ballet practice here. (*This is one of boxer character Michael Max's whirlwinds, actually – Ed.*)



In *Gladiator* speak, 'Joe eats leather'. Unfortunately there's no Jet around to help him out, so this bizarre horizontal attack – another one that takes a fair bit of effort to perfect – knocks him flying. The attacker is Andy Bogard, this being a two-player game.



And here are two of the fighters – Andy Bogard is one of the three guys you can control (the others are called Terry Bogard and Joe Higashi), while the Duck King, as already mentioned, is one of the bad guys.

The fighting in *Fatal Fury: King Of Fighters* (the game is fairly schizophrenic about what it calls itself) takes place against assorted backgrounds represented by areas on this peninsula. Here are four of them now.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

How should I start this review then? Well, to kick off with, I'd better say something about *Street Fighter II*. Indeed, it could be a good idea to get the inevitable 'it's good, but not as good as (you know what)' over and done with at the beginning, thus saving you going straight to the score. So: this is, of course, nowhere near as good as *Street Fighter II*.

Right, now we've got that out of the way, what about the game? Well, *Fatal Fury* started life on the Neo Geo, where it proved very popular indeed. Now it's come to the SNES, and this is generally a very accurate conversion, although it *has* lost some colour, a bit of the background and sprite animation, and a degree of playability in the process. Let's take these one at a time.

First, the graphics. As far as I can see they ain't quite up there with *Street Thingy* – the parallax is less effective in *Fury*, so the backgrounds don't quite have the depth of *SFII*. That said, this is still a very good looking game.

Next, the controls. If you thought the *Street Fighter II* ones were difficult to handle, you'll hate these. The game asks you to do too much to achieve some of the special moves – circular joypad movements, like cut-down versions of *Street Fighter II*'s spinning piledrivers, are over-used and prove difficult to execute on the joypad. It's a much friendlier game on a joystick, but that shouldn't come as much of a surprise.

Variety is lacking, too. There're only three main characters you can choose to control – *SFII*, of course, gave you eight – and each one is less well thought out than Chun Li and co. Infinite credits are likely to reduce its one-player lifespan too, and the great Neo Geo option where two human players could both take on the bosses together is sadly missing too.

Which brings us to the two-player mode. This is really what beat-'em-ups are all about, and it's where *Fury* makes back some ground. It may have weedy sound effects, and lack some attention to detail, but it's still excellent fun – this is an infinitely better buy than *Power Athlete*, *Brass Boss*, et al. At these prices, though, it's strictly for those who love *SFII* and simply *have* to have more of the same.

● Rich Pelley

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
86%	58%	77%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	76%
73%		

VERDICT: Well, it's not, is it? *Street Fighter II*, I mean. Yes, it's got the graphics (almost), but that's about it – the gameplay struggles hard, but still doesn't compare. That said, however, this is still the best of the current crop of pretenders.

Thanks to Game-On, (081) 856 5282, for lending us this cart.

CHUCK ROCK

There are hundreds of Super Nintendo games set in the Stone Age. There's *Dinosaurs*, *Joe & Mac*, *Chuck Rock*, er... (*Start again – Ed.*) There are three Super Nintendo games set in the Stone Age: *Dinosaurs*, *Joe & Mac* and *Chuck Rock*.

***Chuck Rock* is a platform game, spread over five stages and 19 levels, and getting to the end of it will involve lots of dinosaur-bashing and puzzle-solving. Although describing the game as 'prehistoric' wouldn't be entirely fair, it *has* been around for a year or two on the Amiga.**

Did you know that there was no such thing as a Brontosaurus? (The name was inadvertently given to a dinosaur that had already been named Apatosaurus.)

HEEEERE'S... CHUCK!

Here's Chuck. His wife, Ophelia, has been kidnapped by his rival, Gary Gritter, and – needless to say – he's decided to try and rescue her.

His moves include the flying kick and the 'belly butt' – a deeply disgusting way of dispatching baddies.

He's also pretty strong, and can chuck rocks around. Quite a few of the game's puzzles involve the careful positioning, or throwing, of rocks.

Here Chuck's using a dinosaur to catapult himself onto the platform above.

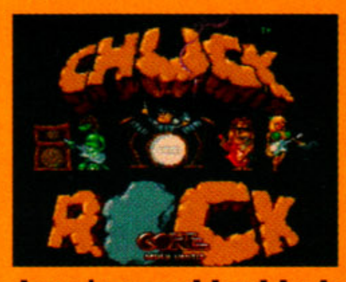
Chuck's about to use the rock to reach the pig's head, thereby gaining a few bonus points.

Stage 2 – inside a volcano. Later levels take you into a swamp, the ice age and the dinosaur's graveyard.

US Release

Game: Chuck Rock
Publisher: Sony Imagesoft
Developer: Core Design
Price: £40-£45
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?



Once you've started playing it, you soon realise that *Chuck Rock* is a little different from your average platform game. Platform-leaping and baddy-bashing skills are, of course, called for, but there's plenty of puzzling to be done as well. And the different ways you can use dinosaurs to assist you in your quest raised one or two laughs here at *Super Play*. (Or should that be Chuck-les?) (*Give it a rest – Ed.*)

But is all this actually any fun? I didn't think so, quite honestly. I got really fed up with getting killed by exactly the same baddies each time I played the game (especially those horrible green bird-things that dive down at you). Getting through each level seemed more like a chore than an enjoyable leisure activity – particularly in view of the lack of passwords. And the 'belly butt' gag wears pretty thin after a while, leaving you wishing for a more effective way of combating baddies.

Graphically, too, *Chuck Rock* never rises above lukewarm. Some of the individual dinosaurs and things are quite neat, but the game has no coherent style, and the colours all look really dull and grubby. Finally there's Chuck himself. He's gross (as his name suggests), and I can't imagine many people being too bothered about whether he gets his wife back or not. (Least of all his wife.) As *Super Adventure Island* has already proved, a game without a likeable central character is, erm... a game without a likeable central character.

It's not a bad game, then, and it's got some interesting ideas in it. It's also the sort of game where, if you did buy it, you'd probably spend many (reasonably) happy hours exploring its levels and unearthing its secrets. But the point is that I wouldn't buy it, and I certainly won't be playing it again now I've finished reviewing it.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
65%	70%	59%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
73%		61%

VERDICT: Whether it's down to the uninspired graphics, the lack of a password system or the charmless central character I'm not entirely sure, but *Chuck Rock* didn't do an awful lot for me.

Thanks to Shekhana Consoles, (081) 340 8565, for lending us this cart.

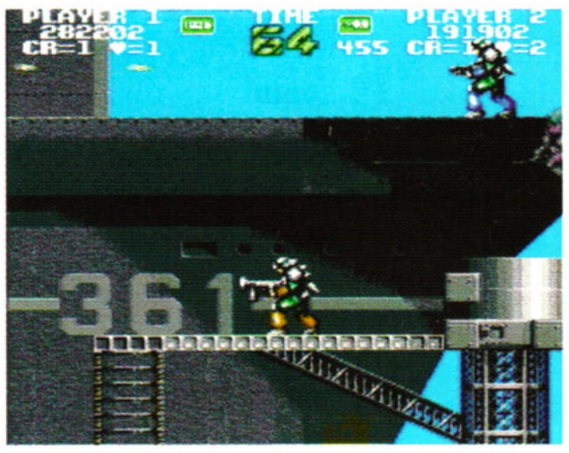
GUNFORCE

Gunforce: not a tatty magazine about firearms, but a platform-based shoot-'em-up that's been converted from a little-known coin-op. And, what's more, it looks oddly similar to a SNES favourite...

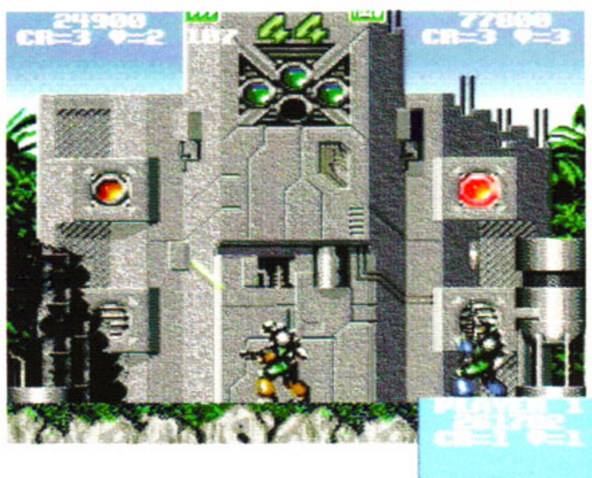
US Release

Game: Gunforce
Publisher: Irem
Developer: Bits
Price: Approx. £45
Release: Out now
Players: 1 or 2 simultaneous
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit

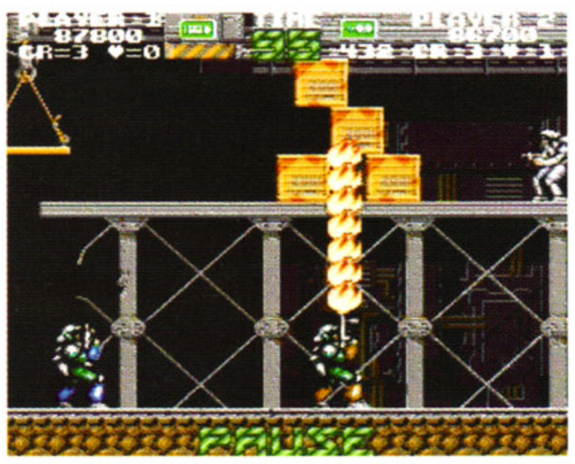
The best bit of the whole game (relatively speaking, of course) occurs within seconds of its start, when you're given the opportunity to leap into this helicopter and attack the enemy from it. Hurrah for helicopters!



There isn't really much to say about this picture. We only put it in because of the nice ship in the background, which, incidentally, is what you're attacking on this particular level.



Here's one of *Gunforce*'s end-of-level, erm, 'things'. You've got to shoot out the flashing blobs while avoiding the gunfire and then the whole thing explodes.



The flame thrower is one of the game's more exciting weapons. Here we're using it to blow open some crates, in which we may well find something even more exciting.

And here's another one, which is actually in the process of exploding. So those enemy soldiers climbing up the ladders from beneath have arrived too late.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

My first thoughts on seeing *Gunforce* were: 'Good heavens – this looks unnervingly similar to *Contra 3*, known here in the UK as *Super Probotector*.' Like *Contra 3*, *Gunforce* is a platform-based shoot-'em-up where you leap from girder to girder, clamber up and down ladders and shoot lots and lots of baddies. You can also pick up ever-more-powerful add-on weapons, including flame throwers and lasers. Here, too, is that simultaneous two-player action, with both players combining forces to mop up the baddies. And – yes – it's also possible to employ the various items of transport that you'll occasionally find littering the landscape, just like in *Contra 3*.

But is it actually as good as *Contra*? Unfortunately not. On the *Contra*-ry in fact! (*Bloody hell – Ed.*) While it plays almost identically in places, the overall execution simply isn't on the same level. The graphics aren't going to impress anybody – other than the occasional nice background, like the ship, they're uniformly bland and uninspiring. The game slows down almost continuously, even when there's hardy anything happening on the screen, and in two-player mode it's a nightmare. And there's loads of sloppy programming – characters falling through platforms they really ought to land on, useless, floaty jumps, flickery sprites, that sort of thing. And perhaps the most annoying thing about it is the way the Jump and Fire buttons are the wrong way round. (At least, they felt that way to me.)

Needless to say, the game isn't anything like as much fun to play as *Contra* either – even if you manage to turn a blind eye to its technical deficiencies.

Gunforce is far from being an utterly appalling game. But it so desperately wants to be *Contra 3* that a comparison is unavoidable, and *Gunforce* comes off worse by a long way.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
61%	68%	54%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
70%		59%

VERDICT: If *Contra 3* was Paul Merton, *Gunforce* would be Bobby Ball. Not recommended.

Thanks to DMC Consoles, (0225) 448253, for lending us the cart.

NHLPA HOCKEY

Fresh from Mega Drive success (it's currently *MEGA* magazine's second favourite game ever!) comes Electronic Arts' celebrated ice hockey sim, a fast and vicious head-to-head blast. This is a game to make the likes of *Kick Off* run off quivering into a corner, and no mistake...

UK Release

Game: NHLPA Hockey
Publisher: Electronic Arts Sports Network
Developer: In-house
Price: £44.99
Release: February
Players: 1 or 2
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

STARTING THE GAME

Before starting a game of *NHLPA Hockey*, you're given this screen. Choose the teams you want, the length of the match and so on. You can customise the game from a five minute blast to a longer, more serious thing, featuring many more real rules.

Next up is Ron Barr, Electronic Arts Sports Network's TV presenter-type person, who describes the strengths and weaknesses of each team, and outlines the type of match. (Don't worry, you can skip this bit if you want.)

Finally, it's face off time. Two players ('centres') compete for the puck, as the rest of the team stand around, waiting for their chance to make a break. (There're loads of face offs in a game – this is how the action is restarted after a goal, stoppage, etc.)

HE SHOOTS, HE SCORES!

1 Attacking the opposition goal is not as easy as it looks. Not only are the computerised goalies very good (and even standing there they block off most of the goal), but a whole host of opposition defenders are quick to get in your way too. Thus this particular attack looks doomed to failure.

2 This one's a lot better, though – the guy with the puck has managed to get around the opposition defender, and a quick pass over to his winger on the left should leave only the goalie left to beat. Of course, beating the goalies isn't all that easy either...

3 And here's another good attempt on goal. Sooner or later someone's going to have to score...

4 Yes, yes, you've done it! The best way is often to make a shot on goal, have it bounce off the goalie's stick or leg, then, while he's wrong footed, follow through again. The flashing red light shows the pucks gone in, while the rest of the team bundle off to celebrate.

ONCE MORE INTO THE RINK, DEAR FRIENDS

It took about six screens stuck together to build up this massive ice rink thingie. As you can see, it's not that far from one end to the other, meaning the action is real end-to-end stuff...

The crowd – there's not an empty seat in the house. They sporadically cheer and jump around in their seats (as all good crowds should).

One of four circle things on the ice. They're not just there to make the whole thing look pretty – they're actually where all face offs occur.

These blue lines (one here, one down below at the bottom there) mark the beginning of each team's defensive zone. (When they're on the attack, it's also the other side's attacking zone.)

One of the opposition players – as you can see there are six (including goalies) per team on the ice at any one time.

The rest of your team (and, indeed, the other team) waiting on the bench for their chance to come on.

The player you're controlling at the moment. He's got the puck (but you can't actually see it in this shot).

The 'sin bin', or penalty box, where bad players (ones caught fighting, say, or illegally grabbing and pinning another player) are placed for a 'bit'.

Your goalkeeper. The computerised goalies in this game are actually very good – too good, you could easily find yourself thinking, as your carefully orchestrated attack goes sadly astray.

Your goal. Unlike in football (or any other game I can think of, really), going behind this is not a problem, it just makes the goalie nervous.

LOADSA STATISTICS!

Everything you ever wanted to know about ice hockey (and a few more things besides)

You want statistics? Well, you've got them. *NHLPA Hockey* (endorsed, as it is, by the National Hockey League Players' Association) features all sorts of information on real-life teams, individual players (you get 16 facts and figures on each one), the number of shots on goal, the amount of time spent in the Attacking Zone and everything else you could possibly want to know about an individual match. Hours of fun (if any of it makes any sense at all to you, that is).

Above and right: Just a few of the mass of stats available for you to plough your way through!

HOCKEY: TWO WAYS TO PLAY

Now this is neat: the game allows for two different ways in which two players can play. The first is your standard head-to-head match, familiar from games like *Kick Off* et al. You both pick a team and play a match, choosing the degree to which you want things like offside penalties to come into play. This plays a very fast (faster than Mega Drive), though slightly jerky, game.

The second style of two-player game sees both of you playing on the same team, as team-mates (each player has a different colour star). This can be excellent fun, though working out set moves ain't easy. A laugh, but slightly less compulsive than the more obvious thrills of head-to-head competition.

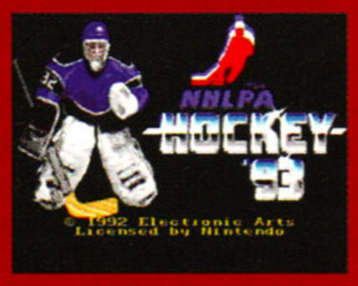
Top: In the 'buddies' game, both human players play on the same side. The bold star is the guy who's got the puck, while the other guy (pale star) is trying to get in position.
Right: The more familiar head-to-head routine.

THAT'S FIGHTING TALK!

A typical fight. These guys suddenly decide they've had too much, throw their gloves to the floor and take a few pops at each other. (You control them, in a very simple beat-'em-up sort of way.)

If you keep charging the other players, tripping the puck carrier, interfering with the goalie etc, sooner or later the other side 'won't be able to take it any more' and a fight can break out. These are often very funny and can result in one or more players getting sent off for five minutes. Having said that, whole games often go by without even the slightest sign of blood – switch 'all penalties' on if you want a greater chance of fisticuffs breaking out.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?



It's sad, but true – EA still haven't got the hang of translating their top-notch Mega Drive sports games to Super Nintendo. They're getting better though – *John Madden '93* (also reviewed this issue) is nearly there, while *Desert Strike* (OK, it's not a sports game, so sue me) is spot on. *NHLPA* isn't (spot on, that is), but that doesn't mean it's no good – slightly juddery graphics aside, it does a decent job of converting the mayhem that is ice hockey to the SNES. If it's not quite the game EA's world-beating Mega Drive version is, then that's only what we've come to expect.

Good points about the game then. To start with, ice hockey is such a natural for the Super NES, I'm surprised nobody's done it before. It's very fast – the action switches from one end of the rink to the other in seconds, a single mistake turning defense into attack in the blink of an eye.

The playing area is small scale, too – small enough to have fairly big sprites on screen, and still see a good chunk of the rink at once. This is much more important than it might first appear – how many times, in *Kick Off* or other football games, have you found yourself lost in a sea of green, unable to tell where the goal is? It's a problem you just don't come across in *NHLPA Hockey*.

It's also easy to understand. Unlike American football, baseball or – hey! – even tennis, you don't have to know the rules to play it properly. Just skate up the rink, whack the puck in the back of the net, and that's it – your granny could do it. (Whether she'd win against the computer-controlled teams is another matter – they're tough, with the goalies appearing particularly infallible.)

There are plenty of options too. You can have action replay highlights, you can choose teams from a massive selection (all in their real strips), you can even try to employ individual star players' special 'signature moves' – whizzy tricks involving backwards shots, special turns and the like.

And there are, of course, plenty of statistics about ice hockey too. This won't matter to many people (after all, who wants to read stats of players most people here will never have even heard of?), but it adds authenticity.

It all adds up to a great game, then, with the downsides fairly insignificant when weighed against such virtues. Still, they're worth mentioning all the same. For a start, there's not all that much depth to it. Ice hockey is a fairly shallow game – there's hardly any strategy involved, just head up the ice, make a few passes, and see if you can fool the opposition goalie into making a mistake.

Second is the animation, which judders about a bit – a few more frames would have been nice on most of the players. They don't glide smoothly around as on the Mega Drive, they jerk – and that, sometimes, makes telling where the puck is (or, indeed, what exactly is going on) difficult to work out.

Then there's the fact that, as with many games of this type, playing against a pal is a million times better fun than taking on the computer.

Finally, though, there's the inescapable fact that good though this is, it isn't quite as good as the smoother, better animated Mega Drive version. And that's almost enough to put you off 'our' one completely, at least until '*Hockey '94*' (or whatever) fixes things. It'd be a pretty foolish way to think, but I'd understand it if you did.

● Matt Bielby

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
74%	80%	88%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
85%		87%

VERDICT: An excellent, fast and furious, ice hockey sim, only let down by slightly jerky graphics and the fact that the actual game of ice hockey seems fairly tactic-free. One of EA's best though, and brilliant with two players.

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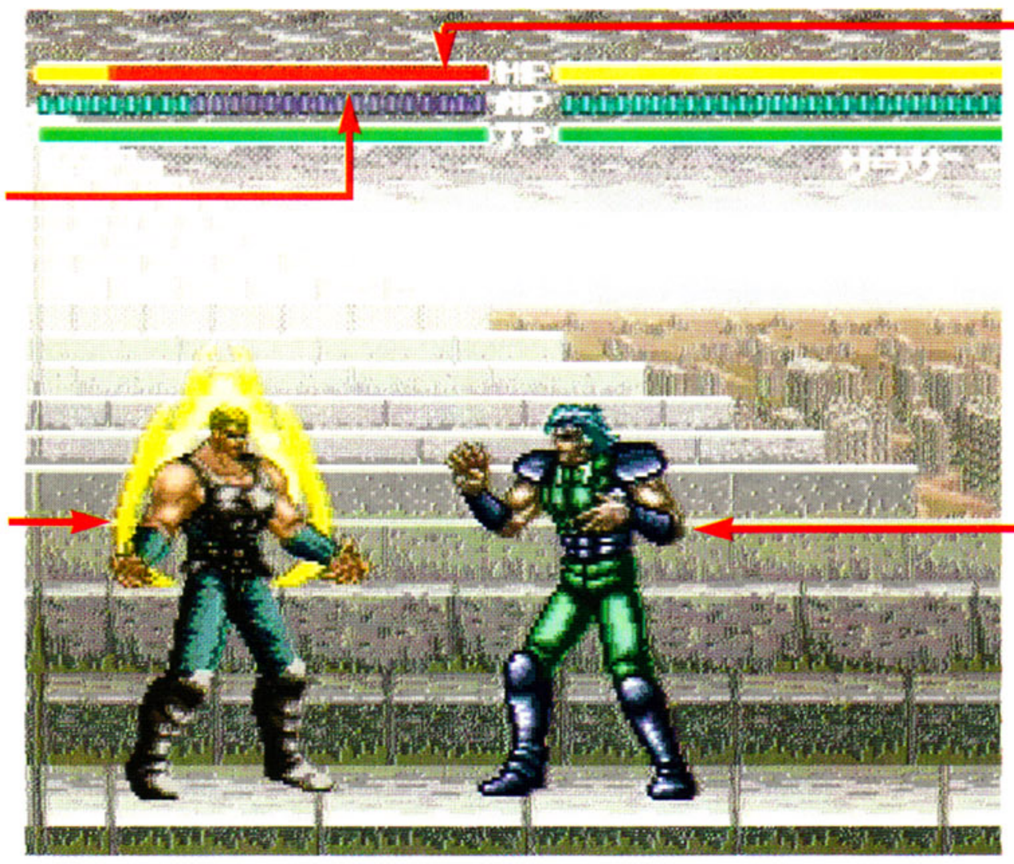
NORTH STAR KEN 6

Japanese Release

Game: North Star Ken 6
Publisher: Toei
Developer: In house
Price: £50-60
Release: Out now
Players: 1 or 2
Cart ROM: 12 Mbit

Yes, this is the same 'North Star' as appears in the recent video release *Fist Of The North Star*. He's been on the Super NES before, but with this new game takes a direct tilt at *Street Fighter II*. But has he got what it takes?



All the purple bars need to be highlighted before your special move becomes available. Highlight the bar twice for special move number two.

Predictably enough, this top bar is your energy reading.

This is you. You can tell you've had your bar highlighted by the yellow flames around your head.

A man with blue hair and green trousers. (This is, as you might have guessed, the bloke you're fighting.)

That's it really. And to think I worked this all out without instructions. (*Instructions? You only needed to ask...– Jason.*)

SO WHAT D'YOU DO THEN?

Wondering what sort of moves there are, how many are available and all that sort of thing? Let's then go straight over to the man in the know, Ken himself.

Hello. Ken here. I've three normal fighting moves, like this punch.

Then there's this impressive jump kick. Ah so.

And finally there's the delicate high kick. Rrrrrrriiiip. (Ahem).

ONE NEW PAIR OF TROUSERS LATER...

I also have three neat special moves.

Hold down the Right button to build up power...

...then let rip with the Left button. Yowza!

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Surely the demise of one-time super group Bros can only be put down to the expulsion of bass player, Ken – though I wonder if Luke and Matt would have dared kick him out if they'd realised his name, crap as it sounds in English, means 'Fist' in Japan? I doubt it.

Still, at least Ken's gone on to greater things since. There's his starring role in *Fist Of The North Star*, the anime video released last year, for one thing, as well as his more minor role in this game. (*I think there're a few things I should explain to you... – Ed.*)

(Minutes later.) Ah, it seems this Ken isn't anything to do with Bros at all, so forget that bit. However, it *is* the same bloke in both the film and the series of games. These have mainly appeared on 8-bit systems before, with only *North Star Ken 5* – an RPG beat-'em-up thing – cropping up on Super Nintendo before.

North Star Ken 6, on the other hand, is very *Street Fighter II*-esque in style. It gives you a whole selection of excessively-muscled fighters – including, of course, Ken – to choose between, and makes them fight. *SFII*-like, they all come with a special move, which drains considerable amounts of energy from your opponent. The winner of each fight tends to be the one who can get his special move in the most, or simply has the best one to start with.

Of course, this reliance on special moves (usually a variation on Ryu's Fireball), coupled with a lack of variety in the normal fighting, makes for very limited gameplay. Add to that characters which aren't as distinctive as the ones in *SFII*, sprites which – though huge and astonishingly fast – are very limited in their animation, and some samey backgrounds and you get a game that's far inferior.

It mimicks some of the surface flash of *SFII*, but boasts none of the depth.

● Rich Pelley

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
60%	54%	44%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	42%
38%		

VERDICT: Effective, large, smooth-moving sprites, some funny moments and lots of speed, but *terribly* shallow in the gameplay department. It's a chore to play and absolutely no competition for *SFII*.

Thanks to Shekhana, (081) 340 8565, for loan of the cart.

SPECIAL F/X

Now this is what we're waiting for! Just over the horizon lies a whole new generation of Super Nintendo games, boasting better graphics, greater speed and – with luck – even more involving gameplay. And we're not talking CD ROM either – you *won't* have to buy new hardware to run them!

US carts for the Super Nintendo. Besides CD ROM, Nintendo thinks the future of console games lies with special enhancing chips included in cartridges.

As most *Super Play* readers will know, CD ROM technology is going to take a year, maybe more, to be introduced on to the market, while suitable large-scale software is developed to go with it. In the meantime, however, Nintendo aren't standing still. A new generation of special cartridge-mounted game enhancement chips – or 'Special F/X' chips, as we've dubbed them for convenience – are about to be released, each one enhancing the capabilities of the standard Super NES many times. The great thing about cartridge mounted chips is that you won't need to buy any new hardware to run the games – everything extra you need is already contained in the cart.

Currently these new chips exist in three forms – the Digital Signal Processor (DSP), the forthcoming Super FX chip and an unnamed custom cartridge processor from Japanese games company Seta. We will look at each one individually later in this article.

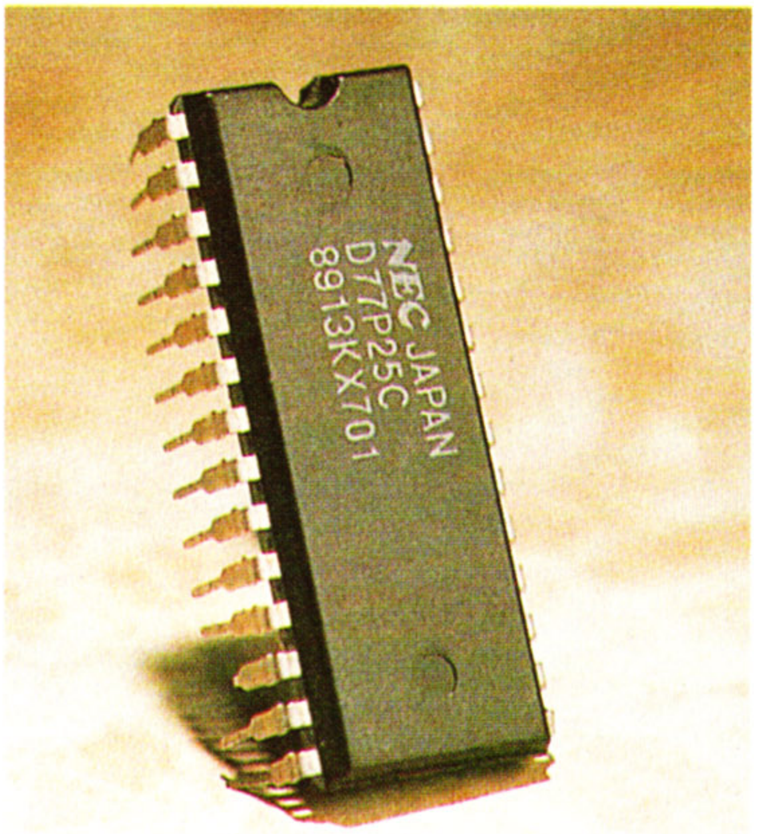
So which games will be – or, indeed, are – using these chips? Well, to the best of our knowledge there are five titles currently on the market making use of extra cart-mounted chips to provide graphics that wouldn't be possible using standard cartridges. The first of these is, of course, *Pilotwings* – a game which was originally launched only a few weeks after the Super Famicom's Japanese debut (in December 1990). And very good it is too. Its existence, however, prompts the question of why the technology to be found in the *Pilotwings* chip was never incorporated into the Super Nintendo itself. After all, it would surely have been possible? They were both developed at roughly the same time.

The answer is, of course, that Nintendo made a conscious decision to leave it out. Quite simply, they needed to keep the cost of manufacturing the Super Nintendo as low as possible to allow for a decently competitive Japanese price point – and if that meant that in the future they would need to incorporate new chips into the cartridges of games that demanded it, then so be it. It was a scenario Nintendo are more than familiar with – the record-selling *Super Mario Bros 3* game on the NES, after all, was but one of many 8-bit Nintendo games that only achieved its effects (primarily the ability to display more colours) by resorting to the use of special graphics chips.

BUT DOES IMPROVED TECHNOLOGY MEAN BETTER GAMES?

Have you ever felt that new video game ideas are few and far between? Well, in Japan it's a complaint that you hear all the time. These new chips have been consciously designed as a way to combat this problem.

The thinking behind them is simple. Create a piece of hardware, in this case a new chip, that will enable programmers to come up with a previously unseen visual effect, and hopefully the sudden increase in creativity that this produces will rub off onto the rest of the project. Just look at the two games carts Nintendo have incorporated digital signal processors (DSPs) into – the stunning *Pilotwings* and the fab *Super Mario Kart*. Both are classics not only because they use the DSPs to do something dramatically new, but because the programmers have come up with some original game ideas making the best use of them, too.

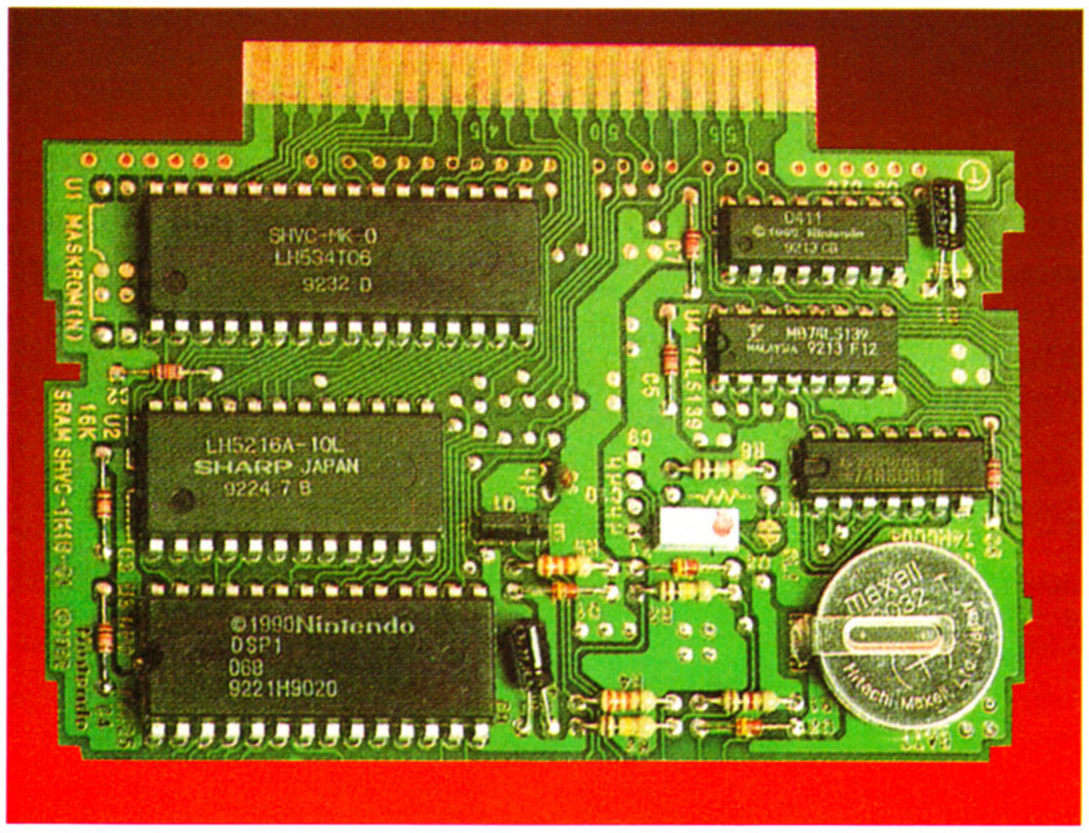


A DSP in all its glory. It may not look like much, but it makes your games run a *lot* faster.

WHAT IS A DSP? (AND WHICH GAMES USE THEM?)

A Digital Signal Processor is a co-processor incorporated into a cart that's specifically designed to handle complex calculations. While a lot of noise has been made about Mode 7 (the Super Famicom's special built-in 3D graphics mode, where a background image can be shrunk, expanded, rotated and even stretched in 3D), its performance is limited without the support of a DSP, especially when handling a lot of sprites simultaneously. With a DSP on board, however, this changes completely, the extra power

P.50



Take a copy of *Super Mario Kart*, smash it to bits and this is what you'll see. The DSP is the chip in the bottom left corner marked... DSP1!

CHIPS

THE FUTURE OF CARTRIDGE GAMES

BY JASON BROOKES

PILOTWINGS

Mode 7 rotates the bi-plane with the help of a DSP...

... it does the same with this hang-glider, making for maybe the best graphics ever.

As previously mentioned, *Pilotwings* was the first game to feature a Digital Signal Processor (DSP), which allows the use of Mode 7 on sprites. The smooth side-to-side rotation of the plane and hang-glider (see above), as well as the 3D effect achieved by the spinning rings, are effects that the processor alone simply couldn't handle at the same time as the detailed 3D landscape.

Pilotwings may be old (well, old-ish), but it's still one of the most graphically impressive games on the machine. Nintendo held back on a sequel because, for graphical advancements to be made, a more powerful chip had to be developed – the Super FX. The big game to be released next year incorporating the new Super FX chip *could* be a split screen two-player version of *Pilotwings*.

SUPER MARIO KART

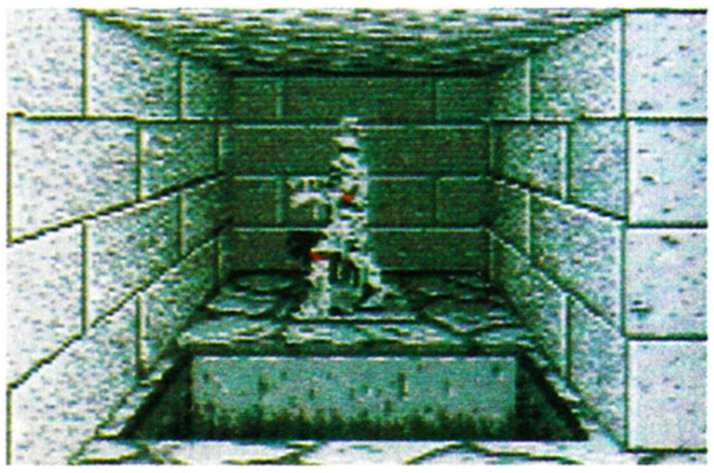
Mario and Toad get ready for turbo acceleration – great, if you get it right.

Who but Nintendo would create such a crazy, but brilliant, battle game?

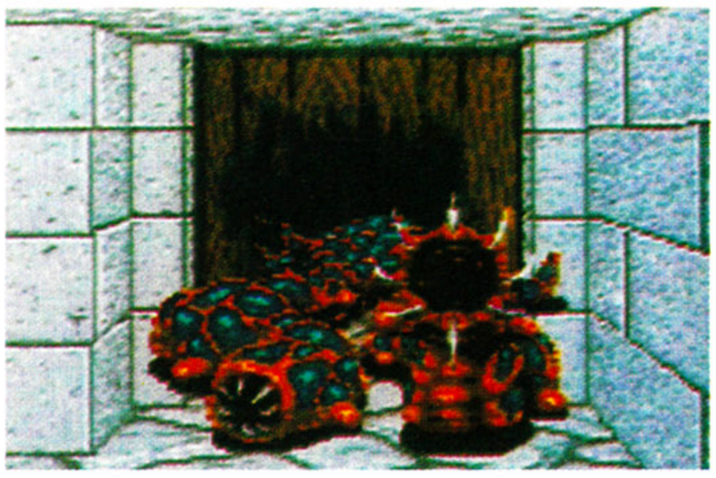
Had *Super Mario Kart*, like *F-Zero*, only catered for one player, it's very possible that it could have coped quite happily without a DSP. However, the split-screen two-player display requires a whole heap of extra processing power – running 3D graphics in the bottom half of the screen at the same time as the top half is only made possible by a DSP chip. Despite what you might have expected, this isn't the same chip that's found in *Pilotwings*, but a very similar one. Though extra hardware is, of course, used in the cart, the added cost of one of these chips is minimal, allowing Nintendo's own pricing of these games to remain virtually unaffected. Third party developers received DSPs in the Autumn of 1991 but to date only JVC have incorporated it so far.

DUNGEON MASTER

This seminal 16-bit home computer RPG classic was released by JVC on the Japanese Super Famicom back in December 1991, and proved hugely popular – despite the lack of a (you'd presume all-important) mouse control. However, it is only now being prepared for release in the States and Europe in a new translated form, though it's still not clear if this'll take advantage of the new SNES mouse. *Dungeon Master* has (slight) historical significance in that it was the first game from a third party developer to include a DSP.



***Dungeon Master*: probably the most successful computer RPG of all time.**



Evil monsters everywhere – only made possible by a DSP chip in the cart.

One of the main DSP-provided features of this game is its ability to keep track of the movements of all the monsters within its vast network of dungeons – complex calculations ahoy! We've played the preview version and it looks just as good as the Amiga and ST versions.

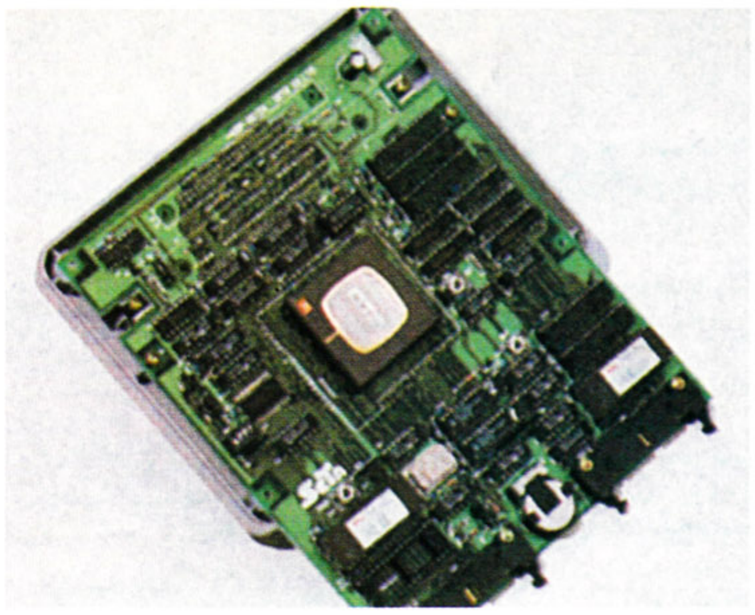
BATTLE TECH

Honest Dave's Used Robots. Here within lie all your mecha fantasies. (*All of them? Are you sure? – Ed.*)

Looks like you're in his sights – it'd be a good time to move, I think.

Battle Tech from JVC is a SNES conversion of a popular Japanese and American simulator game, where players, sitting in huge dedicated units, take control of giant robots. The original machines had a whole bank of processors, and impressive 3D polygon graphics. On the Super Famicom, however, it'll be another Mode 7/DSP job that'll do the dirty work. How well we don't know, but as it's due for release any day in Japan we'll find out soon enough. The US version *Mechwarrior* is also due soon.

You control one of these typically Japanese giant robots.



Seta's larger than life prototype board with a 20 MHz (!) processor included.

even allowing sprites to be manipulated slightly in Mode 7 – the plane and hang-glider in *Pilotwings* are good examples.

However, 3D games aren't the only games that need extra processing power. Many top strategy and simulation games can use the extra power, as can complex board games like Japanese chess (or 'Shogi'). It's the fact that the number of game calculations needed often exceeds what's feasible with the standard internal processor that counts.

The speed of the Super Famicom is undoubtedly its main stumbling block, you see. It's got an unusually slow processor (while the fastest speed the processor can run at is 3.58 MHz, most games run at an even slower 2.6 MHz, which can cause major problems for programmers). Subsequently a lot of action games slow down in places – it takes clever programming and a degree of familiarity with the machine, to get around the problem.

Of course, with a DSP on board, it's a different story. The processor speed is, in effect, boosted to the 7.6 –10 MHz range, and the DSP can even process info from the CPU (central processing unit) at the same time as handling its own custom tasks. It sounds impressive, and it's certainly groovy in practice.

WHAT IS THE SETA DSP?

Nintendo licensee and developer Seta have decided to go it alone, developing their own chip to improve the performance of the Super Famicom. Players of their driving game *F1 Exhaust Heat* will remember the slow-down that occurred when more than a couple of cars were on screen at the same time. Well, so do Seta, and to avoid those problems (and, presumably, to allow for better graphics, too), Seta are adding their own, home-grown, cart-mounted processor to speed things along a bit in the sequel, *F1 Exhaust Heat 2*. This isn't just an auxiliary processor, but a real second processor in its own right. It will be, they claim, twice as fast as the original DSP chip by Nintendo. (Apparently the actual clock speed of the chip is

Left, top and above: *F1 Exhaust Heat 2* from Seta, which includes a super fast custom processor to handle Mode 7 graphics and really smooth sprite scaling.

THE SUPER FX CHIP: THE BEST OF THE BUNCH (AND IT'S BRITISH!)

The Argonaut development team, responsible for the Super FX chip. Main man Jez San is at the back.

At the moment, little is known about the specifics of the new Argonaut-developed Super F/X chip, and the games it will run. However, it has taken around two years to develop and is based on RISC (reduced instruction set chip) technology, as found in the Archimedes Home computers. This form of processing is streamlined and basically much faster and more adept at handling 3D graphics. Initially there was talk of it being incorporated into the Super Nintendo itself, but as Nintendo's projected release date for the machine approached, and still the chip wasn't ready, this idea was abandoned, replaced by the current incorporate-the-chip-into-those-game-carts-that-need-it philosophy.

The original concept behind Super FX is simple – to greatly increase the power of the Super NES, especially as regards the use of 3D graphics. With this new chip, effects like texture mapping and proper 3D shaded polygons will be possible (the developers Argonaut are well-known 3D game specialists, so it would seem likely that the concept for the chip developed from their own needs).

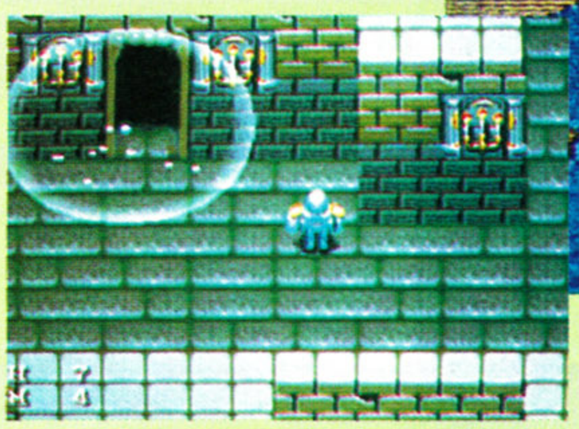
However, that's not all the chip is good for. A contact close to Nintendo in Japan told us, 'It's also great for coin-op games. The new chip allows developers to do sprite scaling and rotation of the same sort of quality you see in coin-op machines. It speeds everything up too, including the game logic. The plan is that a Super Famicom or Super Nintendo game running a Super FX chip will be better quality than a Neo Geo game in most ways.'

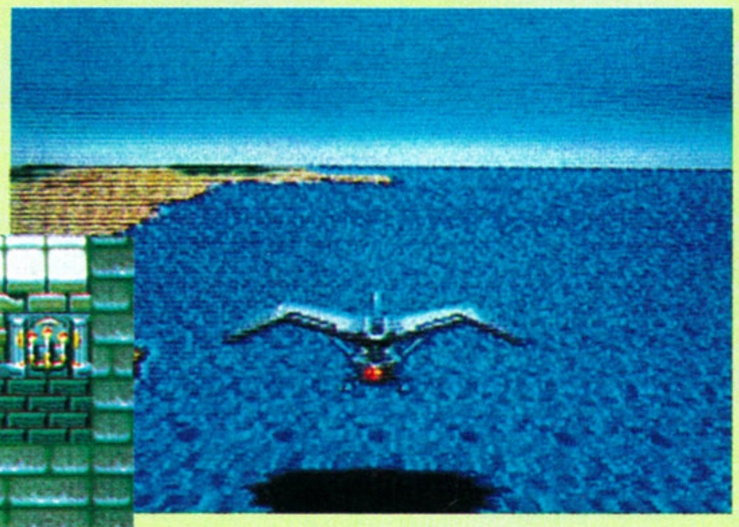
However, details of the games that will use this new chip are harder to get hold of. The first game, jointly developed between Nintendo and Argonaut, is to be announced at the American Winter CES (Computer Entertainment Show) this January. What it is, exactly, isn't clear, though rumours of an *F-Zero 2* or a *Pilotwings 2* persist. It's a 'nice, big 3D action title', we've been told, which adds some credibility to that.

Details of further titles are even harder to get hold of, although there are rumours that Enix's forthcoming 12 Mbit Japanese RPG *Ernald* will incorporate the chip. Apparently samples of the chips haven't been distributed to third party developers yet, though they will soon – Argonaut and Nintendo themselves are the only developers to have them. 'People will only use the chip if they really need some of the extra speed or 3D ability it allows,' we've been told. 'It'll cost extra money to use it, after all. However, when a few of these games have come out, and the public starts to demand impressive software up to that standard, more and more developers will turn to the Super FX chip as the only way to get the sort of state-of-the-art effects they want.'

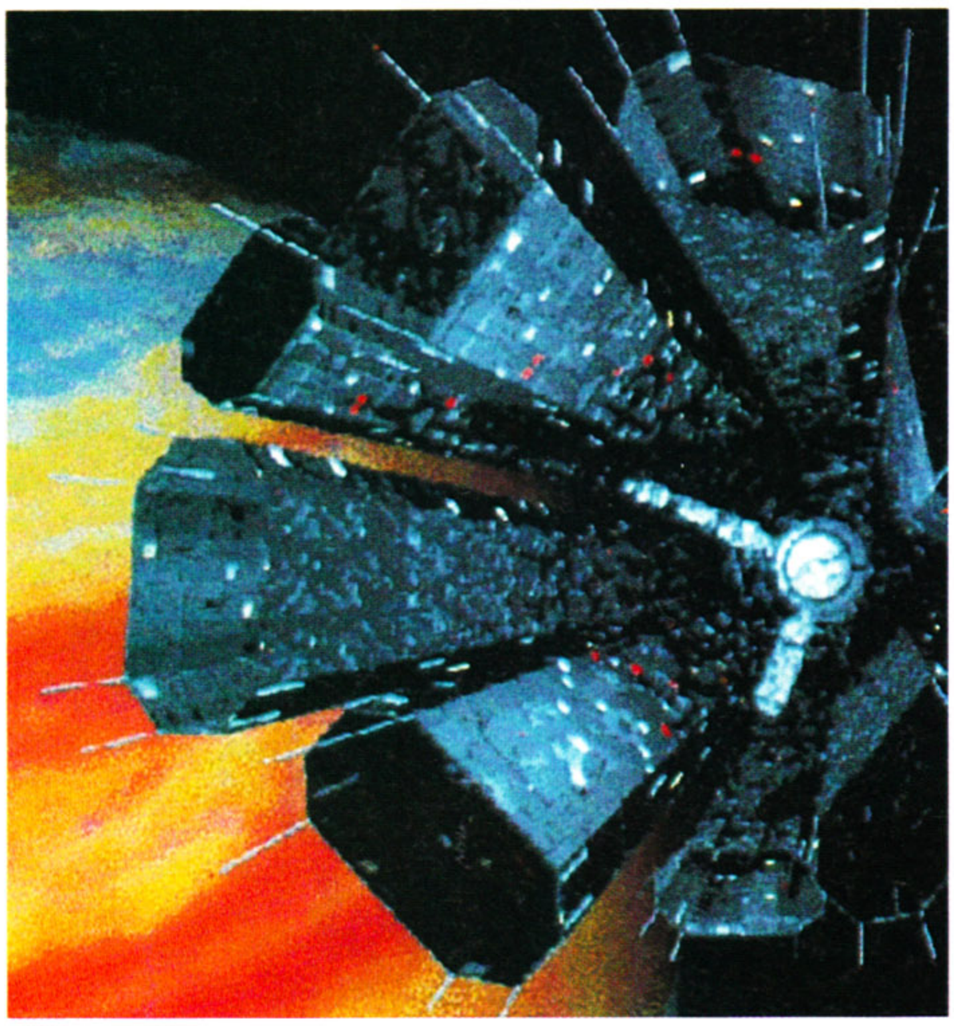
Nintendo aren't announcing the price Super FX equipped games will come at, but expect them to be similar, or slightly cheaper, than *Street Fighter II*. Also hush-hush, though much rumoured, is that the Super FX chip will appear in some new form in the Super NES CD-ROM. Once again, you'll hear more about these developments in the pages of *Super Play* as we get the information...

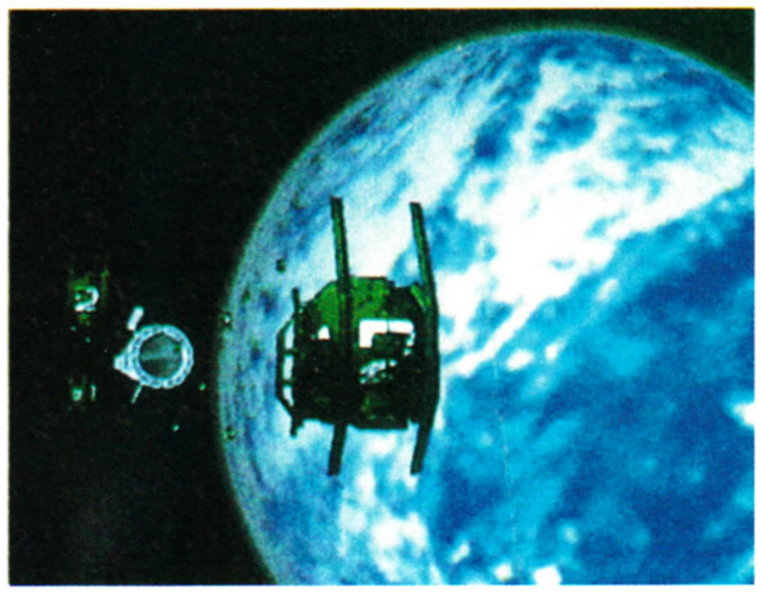
F-Zero was a spectacularly successful game in Japan. Many people reckon a sequel will include the new Super FX Chip.





Left and above: The oddly named *Ermald* from Enix is rumoured to include a DSP, possibly the Super FX.





Left and above: *Gun Blade* is a Japanese space shoot-'em-up by a little-known (in the console scene at least) company, Link. It was originally scheduled for the CD ROM system, but since the announcement of the Super FX chip last August, it seems to have gone underground. At least one thing looks certain – 3D games of all sorts are going to appear in increasing numbers, because of the extra processing power offered by these chips.

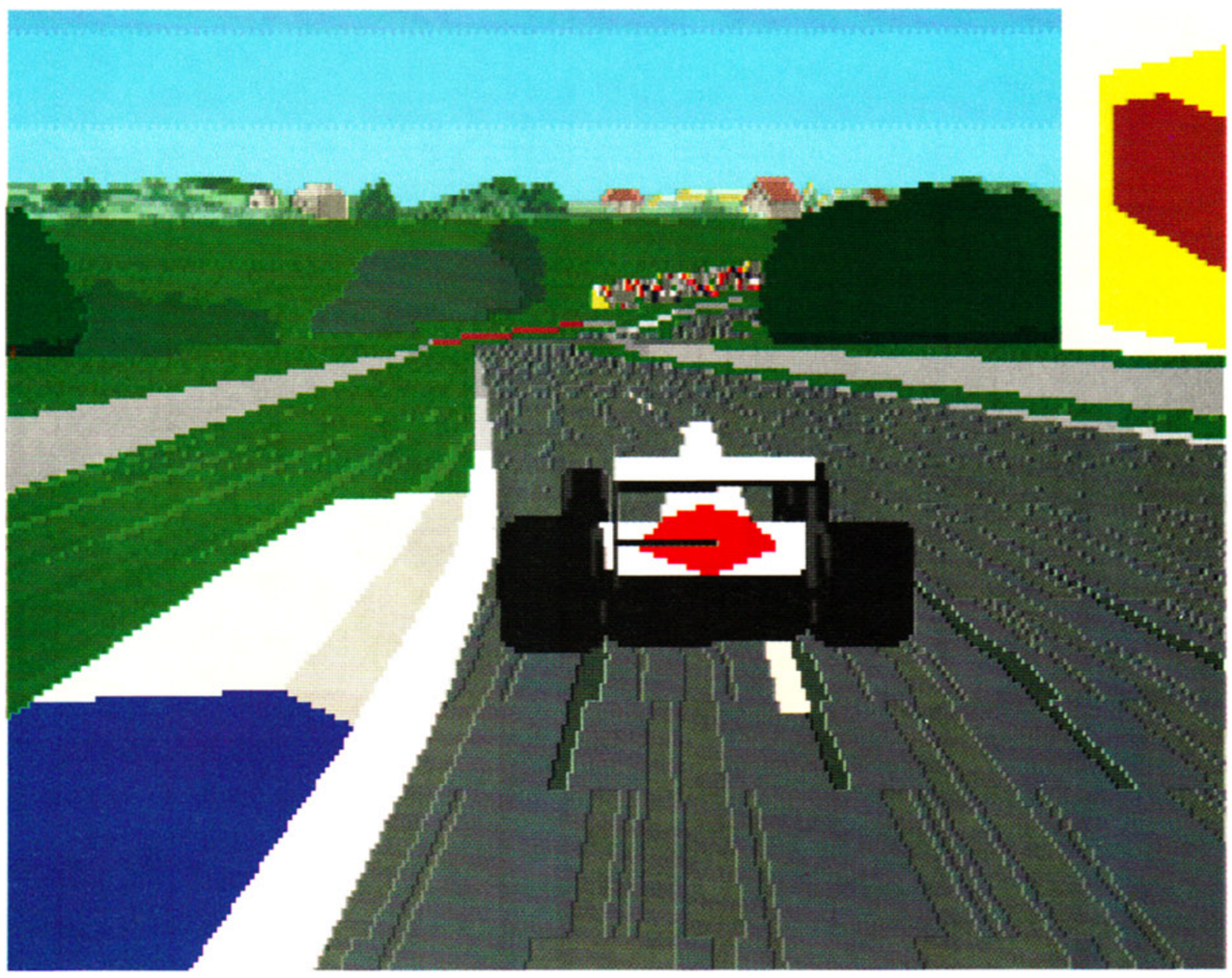
around 20 MHz.) Expect some pretty impressive Mode 7 scaling, and for the first time on the Super Famicom, smooth sprite scaling and rotation too – the chip contains custom hardware that takes care of the maths needed to calculate the different sizes of objects.

F1 Exhaust Heat 2 is currently scheduled to cost the same as *Street Fighter II*, 9,800 yen (about $46), so you can imagine how much importers will be charging for it. It was due to be released in December '92 in Japan, but has now been delayed until this March. We'll let you know details as we hear them.

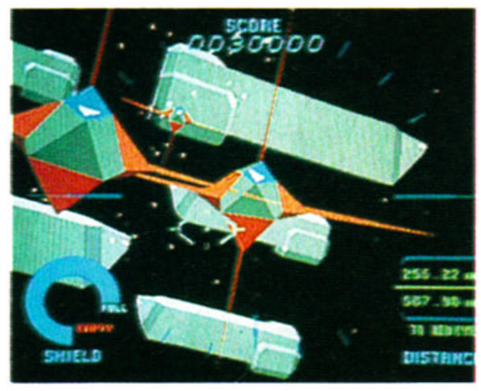
WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Okay, we know – there's not all that much in the way of firm news at the moment. However, what we *do* know is exciting. If there's one thing that's going to keep the Super Nintendo firmly at the top of the console super-league, it's ever more spectacular games, and things like the Super FX chip are exactly what we need to make this possible – if Nintendo continues to increase the size and potential of the games running on their machines without forcing any of their customers to upgrade to new models, the size and longevity of the SNES market will be assured.

At the moment these new chips are mainly concentrating on improving the console's 3D potential, but with time further avenues can be explored. Still, the new possibilities of 3D are exciting enough for the moment, with rumours about successful 3D PC games cropping up on SNES appearing almost daily. For instance, MicroProse are said to be looking to develop a SNES version of their chart-topping racing game, *F1 Grand Prix* (currently big news in the States, and enjoying tremendous success as *World Circuit* in Japan) – a game that certainly couldn't be done using the standard Super NES alone. Whether the complex math demanded by *F1 Grand Prix* is achieved through the Super FX chip or 32-bit CD ROM, we hope to be the first to let you know.



Above: Quite possibly the best Formula 1 driving game ever written, Geoff Crammond's *F1 Grand Prix*, is destined for the Super FX Chip. Er, perhaps.
Left: More sexy PC graphics from *F1 Grand Prix* on a 386 PC – these polygons really move. If and when it's running on a Super FX chip, expect a real ground-breaking game.



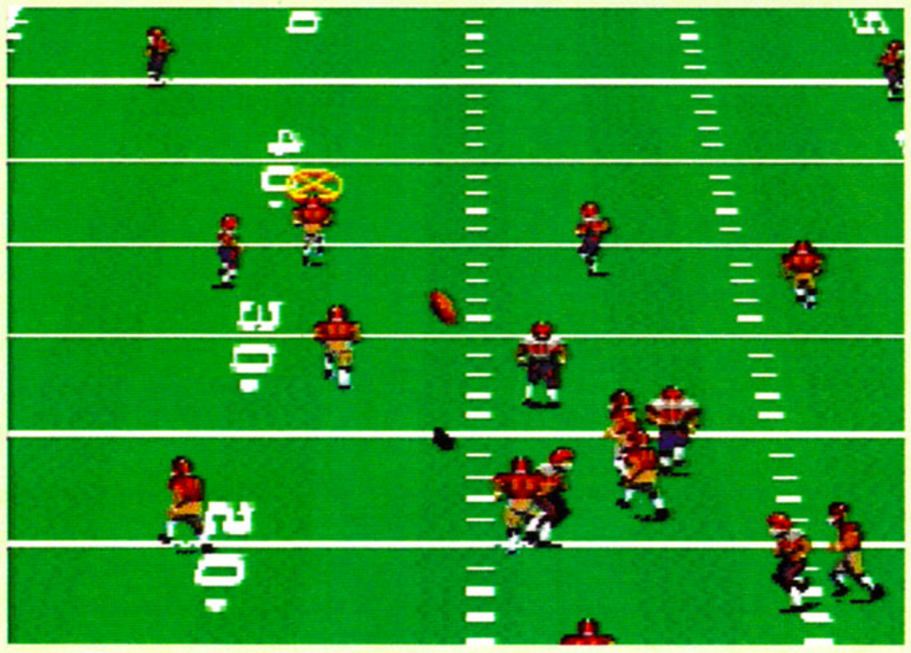
Namco's spectacular 3D space game, *Star Blade* – another potential candidate for either the Super FX chip or CD ROM. Graphics like these require *colossal* processing power.

Star Blade by Namco is another previously unconvertable title that may now appear. The Japanese company Link is working on a similar looking game to appear on the CD platform, but it's (just) possible that the technology behind that could be used for *Star Blade* too. And then, of course, (and try not to get too excited about this one), there's a super fast version of Japanese chess from Seta on the cards too.

And that's about it for the moment. If one thing's guaranteed, it's that these new games aren't going to come cheap. The future's so bright, you'd better start saving your pennies now. Watch this space...

JOHN MADDEN '93

Super Play Action Football, reviewed in issue 2, was okay but nothing special. Is this any better? (And do we non-Americans really care?)



If you're not familiar with American football, think of it as rugby with interruptions and complicated bits. It's like rugby because the object is to kick or throw the ball up to the other end of the field. There's an interruption every time the ball changes hands so that strategies can be planned, and commercial breaks slotted in. And the complicated bits involve formations, sets and plays.

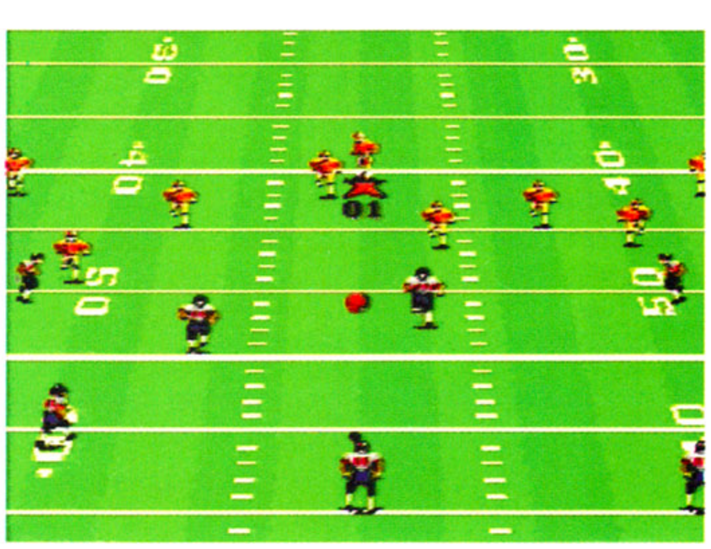
A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

At the risk of inviting accusations of the blind leading the blind, here's how to play American football the *John Madden '93* way:

1 Set up your game. There are loads of options to tinker with, but the main one is whether you're playing a one- or two-player game. (And whether or not both players are on the same team.)

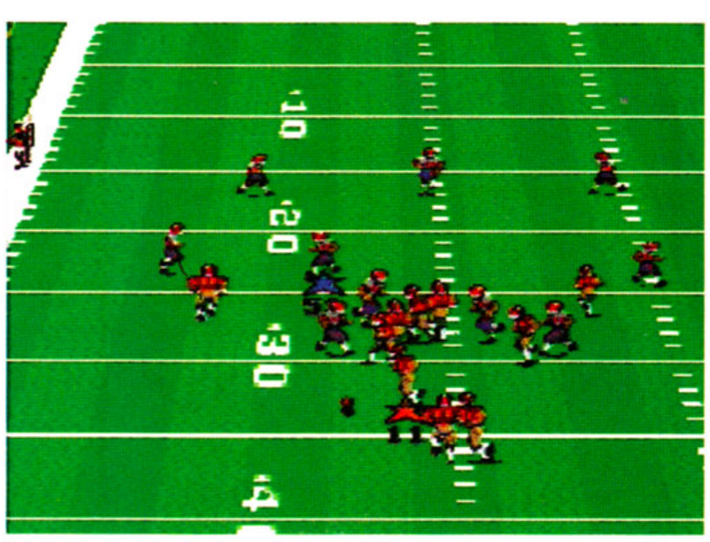
2 Compare the teams. Some teams are better than others (obviously), while others are merely 'different'. (Mightn't it have been nicer to know all this *before* you picked the teams, though?)

3 Toss the coin. Whoever wins gets to decide who'll kick off, while the loser chooses which way they'll be playing in the first half.



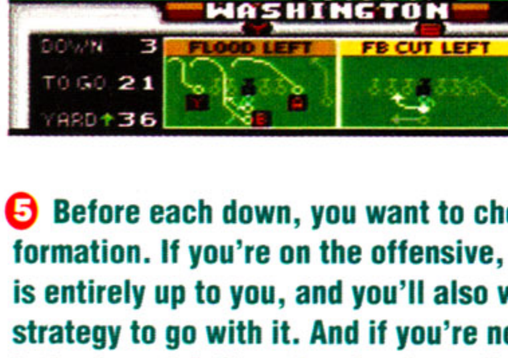
4 You've chosen to kick off, say. Kick the ball as far into the other team's half as you can. They've then got four 'downs' to try and get the ball at least 10 yards towards your end. If they do that, they get another four, and so on. If not, you get the ball.

5 Before each down, you want to choose a formation. If you're on the offensive, the formation is entirely up to you, and you'll also want to pick a strategy to go with it. And if you're not, you'll need to try to match the offensive formation.



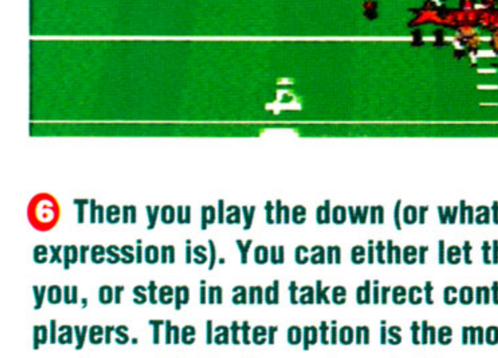
6 Then you play the down (or whatever the expression is). You can either let the game do it for you, or step in and take direct control of the players. The latter option is the most fun, once you've got into the swing of things.

Electronic Arts are into sports games at present, hence this EA Sports Network screen.



Here's John. Not a football player himself, but actually a crumbly old commentator.

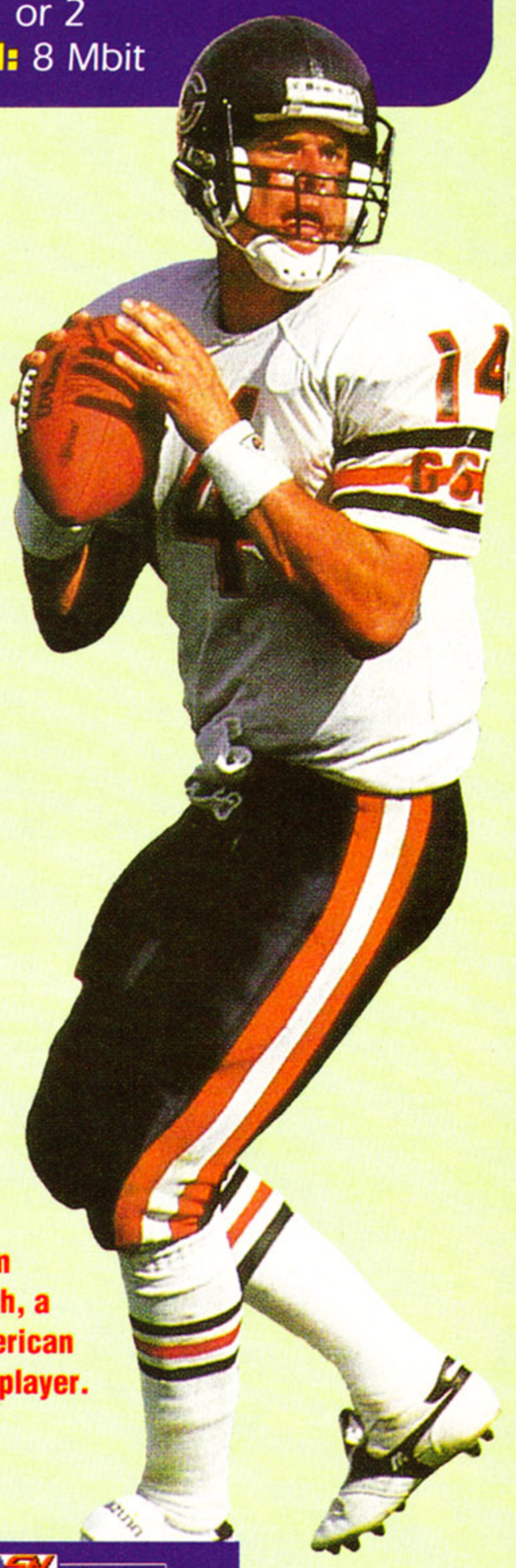
Varying weather conditions mean you can play on snow if you want...



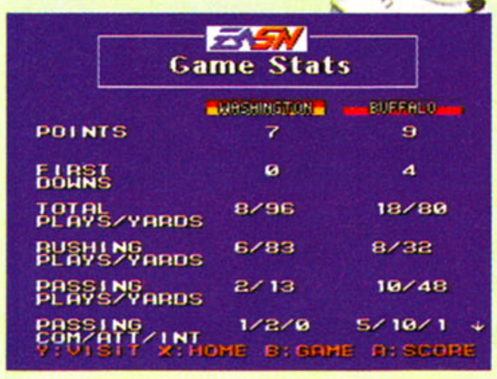
...or, by encouraging it to rain a bit, in the mud. Oink! (*Eh? – Ed.*)

UK Release

Game: John Madden '93
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Electronic Arts Canada
Price: Approx. £45
Release: March
Players: 1 or 2
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

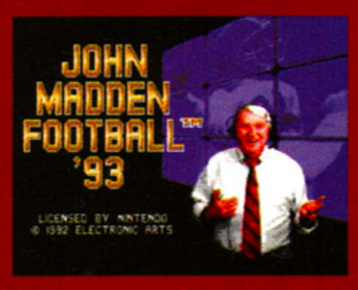


Here's Jim Harbaugh, a popular American football player.



After each game you're shown lots of scary-looking statistics (which it's probably best to ignore) along with a pass code. Write this down and you'll be able to re-enter the league at a later date in the same position.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?



If you were looking for someone to review an American football game, the last thing you'd want is someone who a) doesn't know anything about American football, b) doesn't *want* to know anything about American football, and c) has never played *John Madden*, either on the SNES or the Mega Drive. Right? Well, you try telling that to this lot. I did, and promptly had my lunch money locked in Matt's desk. (Sigh.)

A cure for problem a) was simple enough. Several days of reading about broken passing plays, pass rushing assignments and wind indicators, plus a few evenings in front of Channel 4, and I was up there with the best of them. b) was no problem, either, as by this stage I was getting pretty hungry. That just left c). I swallowed my pride and had a good, long go on the Mega Drive *Madden* (slick and really playable), and also *John Madden* on the SNES (not so slick, and pretty roughly presented, but more or less as playable). (And, in the process, I discovered that an offensive audible wasn't quite what I'd imagined it to be.)

Having done all that, getting to grips with *Madden '93* on the SNES was a doddle. (I even started to enjoy myself after a while.)

So that leaves us looking at a three-scenario review:

Scenario 1: You've played *Madden '93* on the Mega Drive and want to know whether the SNES version is as good. Well, graphically it's not so hot. The Mega Drive game is wonderfully slick, despite having to scroll the pitch around in 3D at the same time as animating all the players, and doing it all without the benefit of lots of special 3D graphics chips. The SNES version looks all jerky in comparison. This makes it quite tricky to see what's going on at times, particularly when it comes to following the movement of the ball. Surely leaving Mode 7 to handle the 3D field ought to leave more time for proper animation, rather than less? (And the colours aren't half as good as the Mega Drive ones, either.)

More controversial than that, though, the SNES version moves around quite a bit faster. There are two schools of thought on this. (I know, 'cos I asked lots of people.) Some thought the extra speed made the game more fun, while others (me included) reckoned it didn't give you enough time to react to what was going on on-screen. I think it's probably safe to say that the Super Nintendo version of *Madden '93* is just as much fun as the Mega Drive one, but in a slightly different way.

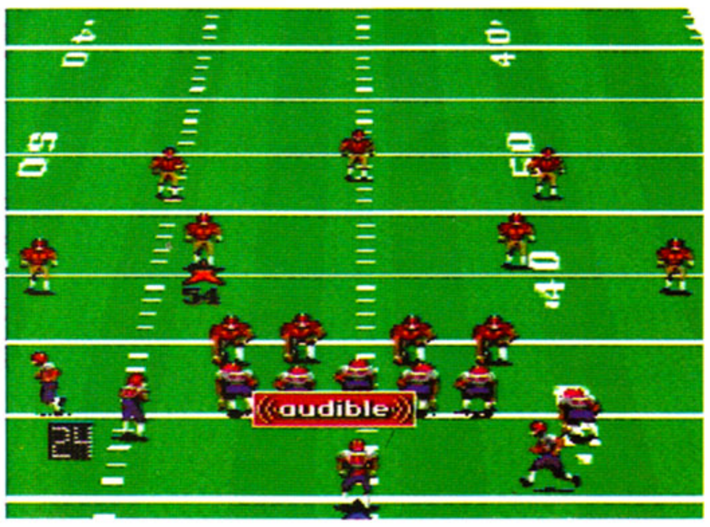
Scenario 2: You've bought an import copy of *John Madden* (SNES), and are wondering whether to upgrade. Well, *Madden '93* is much tidier-looking, and has a few more audibles and things, but isn't enough of an improvement to merit owning them both. Although it's up to you and your wallet, of course.

Scenario 3: You've never played an American footy game in your life, and are wondering whether this might be a good place to start. If you know the sport, and think you might enjoy playing it on your SNES, go for it. (And go for this rather than *Super Play Action Football*.) And if you don't like American football, well, you're stuffed, basically.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
75%	70%	81%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	83%
85%		

VERDICT: A real improvement over the original *John Madden* game, though mostly it's through cosmetic differences. Not quite as good as it could have been, mind, and probably not quite as good as the Mega Drive version (though that's a matter of opinion), but still an excellent American football game that's unquestionably the best on the SNES. Hurrah for Electronic Arts!



7 You can also 'call an audible', if you want – a last-minute change of strategy to confuse the other team. They're pre-set, in contrast to *Super Play Action Football* where you choose your own, tending to disturb the game too much, we thought.

8 Make it to the other team's endzone without getting tackled or dropping the ball and you've scored a touchdown! Hurrah! (Look – one or two of the players are keeling over with the excitement of it all.) That's worth six points. However...

9 ...you've then got the opportunity to score an extra point by going for a field goal (which is just like a conversion in rugby). Then everyone treks back to the middle of the field and the game starts again, with the team that scored kicking off.

DEATH VALLEY RALLY

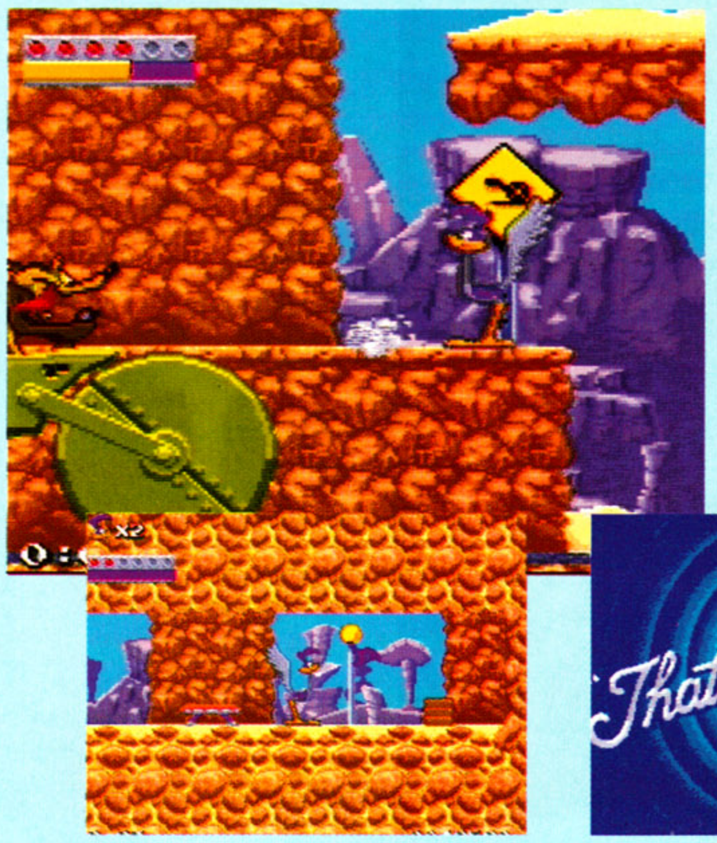
Jonathan's face lit up when he was offered this to review – *Road Runner* is his favourite ever cartoon. Sadly, however, we had to stick our fingers in our ears to block out the mournful wails as he started playing it.

US Release

Game: Road Runner's Death Valley Rally
Publisher: Sunsoft
Developer: Icom Simulations
Price: Approx. £45
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

Road Runner is an enigmatic figure. He spends all day running around at incredible speed, trying to evade the clutches of...

...Wile E Coyote, who would very much like to eat Road Runner for lunch. He never quite manages it, though.



It soon becomes clear that *Death Valley Rally* is comprised of some absolutely fabulous animated sequences (they really are wonderful) linked by some truly appalling platform levels.

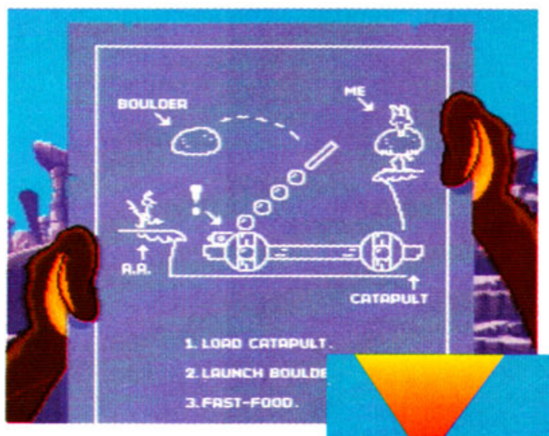
Coo! A secret room! Peck the crate for an extra life.

There's a strange irony there...

THINGS YOU REALLY OUGHT TO KNOW...

Flags: These are dotted about the landscape, and serve two purposes. First off, at the end of the game you get a flag bonus, which varies depending on – yes – how many flags you passed. Plus, every time you go past a flag it acts like the finishing tape things in *Mario*: you only have to go back that far when you die.

Shields: Collect these to make you invulnerable for a bit.

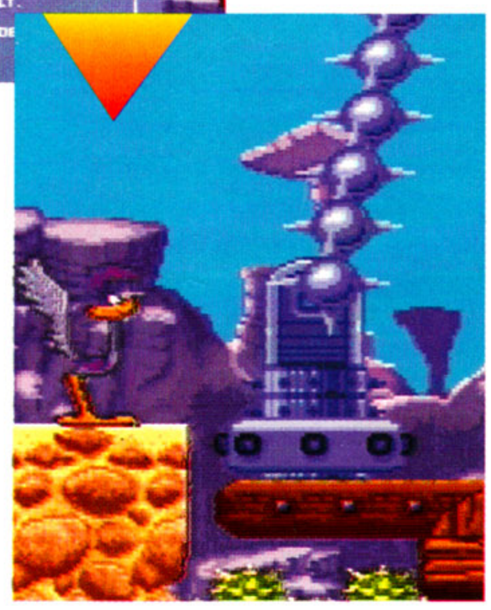


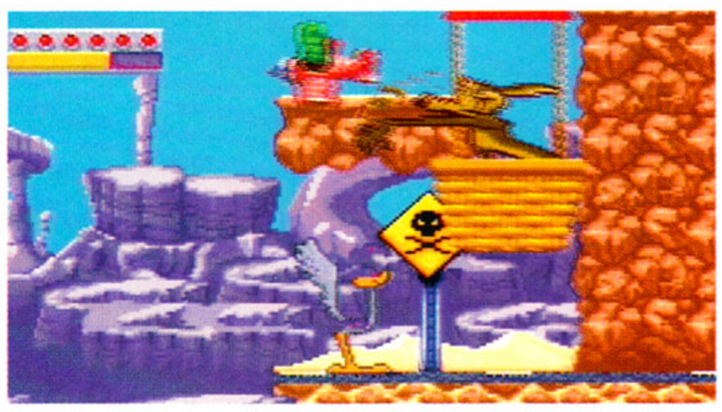
Levels: After every three levels you've got to face one of Wile E Coyote's super-weapons.

Birdseed: Pressing Y gives you a burst of turbo speed – useful for zooming up walls. But you can only do this a limited number of times, and each time you do it the yellow bar at the top left of the screen goes down. Top it up again by eating birdseed.

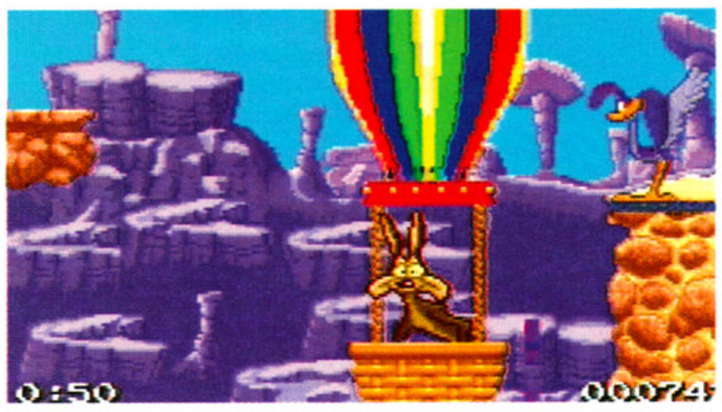
Baddies: These are pretty harmless (to start with, at least) and can be disposed of by pecking them to death.

Trampolines: Jump on these and you'll bounce up and down. (*How about doing 'levels' and then giving it a rest, eh? – Ed.*)



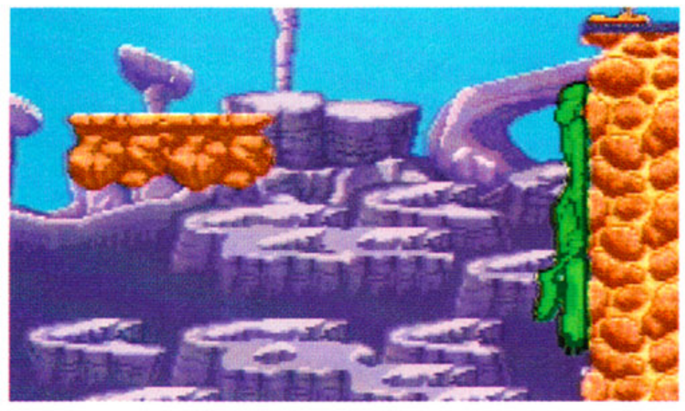


Attacking Road Runner from a hot-air balloon using a radio controlled plane sounds like a good idea...



...but it all goes horribly wrong. Poor Wile E Coyote.

Wile E thinks again, and comes up with this smart flying suit with which to dive-bomb Road Runner.



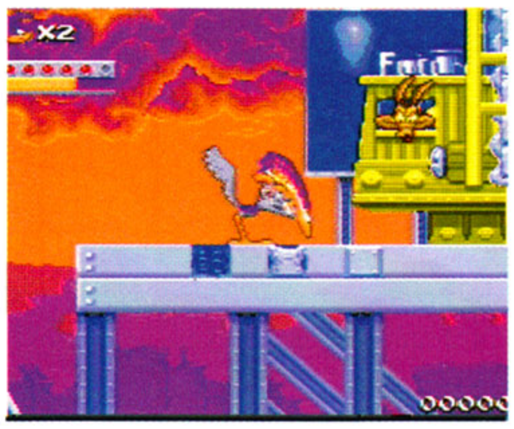
Alas, he forgets to look where he's going and – oof! – flies into a cliff-face.

Surely nothing can go wrong this time, as Wile E chases Road Runner in a road-roller...

...but it does! A nut comes loose, and Wile finds the tables turned.

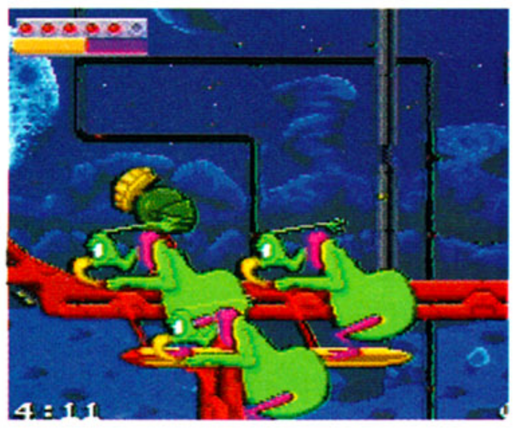
UNDISCOVERED LANDS

We'd love to really impress you by showing you lots of pictures from really far into the game, but unfortunately the first level is so £$@&*ing difficult that you'll have to make do with some scenes from the demo. (At least we're honest.) You'll just have to play the game for yourselves to find out what happens next!



Here's Wile E trying to clobber you with his demolition ball. Peck out the bolts that support it.

Here Road Runner's running round a mine, being pursued by Wile on a railway truck.



Here there are lots of light-bulbs that teleport you from place to place. And some green birds.

The good news: we finished the first level! (But who's *that*?) The bad news: level two's even harder...

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Like they said, *Road Runner* is my favourite ever cartoon. Everything about it is perfect – the timing, Wile E Coyote's hapless expression, all the Acme products – and the Super Nintendo version sounded, from the signals I was getting, as though it was going to be just as good. I was really, really, looking forward to it.

And – yes – to begin with I thought all my dreams had come true. (All the ones involving *Road Runner*, anyway.) Road Runner himself is perfect, right down to the way he goes 'mbeep mbeep' when you press 'L'. Wile E Coyote is even better. When I saw him dressed up in his green flying suit I nearly... well, I laughed, anyway. The silly inventions, too, are all there, and when you add on the great backgrounds, fabulous music and top-notch presentation, the scene looks set for the best ever cartoon-licency-thing of all time.

So what's gone wrong? (And it *has* all gone horribly wrong.) Well, the problem seems to be that Sunsoft have taken all the good bits of the *Road Runner* cartoon – the brilliant characters, the ridiculous inventions, the sound effects, the 'look and feel' – and, er, that's it. You just watch all the intro sequences and interludes, you laugh at all the jokes and that's it. THAT'S IT! You can do all that by tuning into *Rolf's Cartoon Club*, for heaven's sake – there's no need to spend £45 on a game.

Okay, so that's not strictly true. There is a game in there too. But it's the simplest sort of game – a platform game. And the worst sort of platform game, too – the sort with horrible controls that send Road Runner floating and skidding all over the place; the sort with platforms hidden out of view off the edge of the screen that you're supposed to jump onto; the sort with nothing much to do; and – worst of all – the sort where if you set a foot wrong (or get on the wrong side of the awful collision detection, which is against you every step of the way) you'll float all the way back down to the bottom of the playing area and have to start climbing up again from scratch. It's horrible.

And then, of course, there are no passwords or anything so every time you die you have to start again from the first level. Horrible, horrible, horrible.

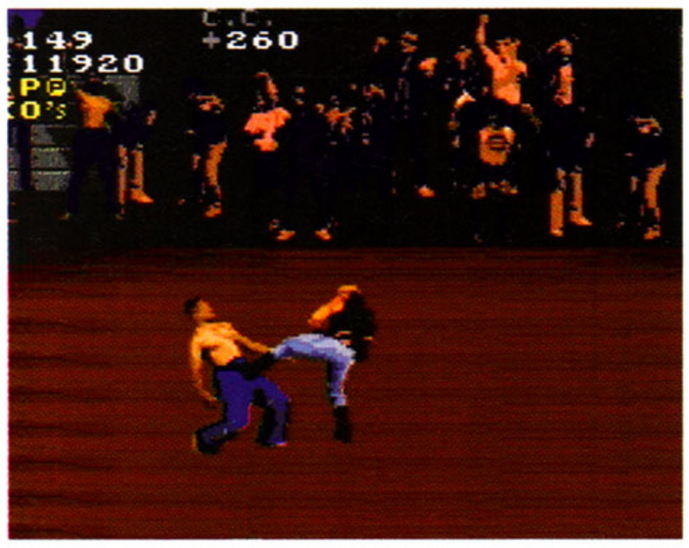
● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
88%	79%	29%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	42%
45%		

VERDICT: Everything that makes *Road Runner* so wonderful (and that what this gets most of its marks for) dragged down by an awful game. It's too hard, and simply not worth the trouble of persevering with.

PITFIGHTER

As you can see, most of the graphics started life as digitised photographs.



Left: The crowd is crudely animated in the background, while our heroes strut their (vaguely) funky stuff up front. A severe lack of moves and some ridiculous moments conspire to nobble the whole game.

Right: Two-player matches liven things up a bit, but the game's still in real trouble.

UK Release

Game: Pitfighter
Publisher: THQ
Price: £44.99
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Picture the scene. It's Christmas morning and little Sammy delves deeply into his bulging Christmas stocking, hardly able to control his excitement. 'Surely they got me a game...,' he reassures himself, 'please, please let it be *Street Fighter II*!' Seconds later he pulls out a black and red box. Hurrah! It's a game, sure enough, a beat-'em-up even, but, oh no – it's *Pitfighter*.

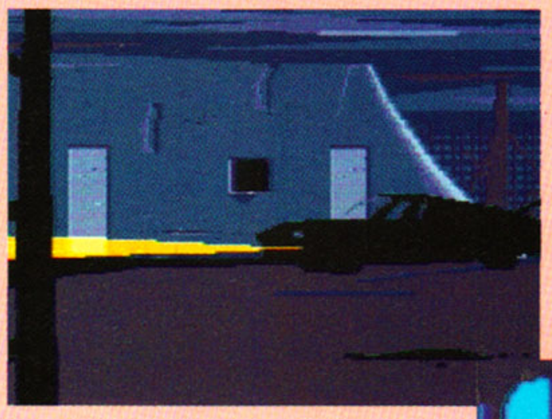
Make no mistake, this is a hugely disappointing release. If little Sammy had persevered with the game, he'd have found that: a) the 'innovative' digitised character graphics move lousily, look rubbish, and have precious little variety, b) there's no introduction to the game at all (just a title screen), c) there are hardly any options (there are only three fighters to choose between), d) there are no weapons, secret moves or anything to collect, and e) it plays like a dog. Two-player mode (normally the saving grace of these things) is just as bad. This is all graphical novelty (such as it is), and no substance.

● Jason Brookes

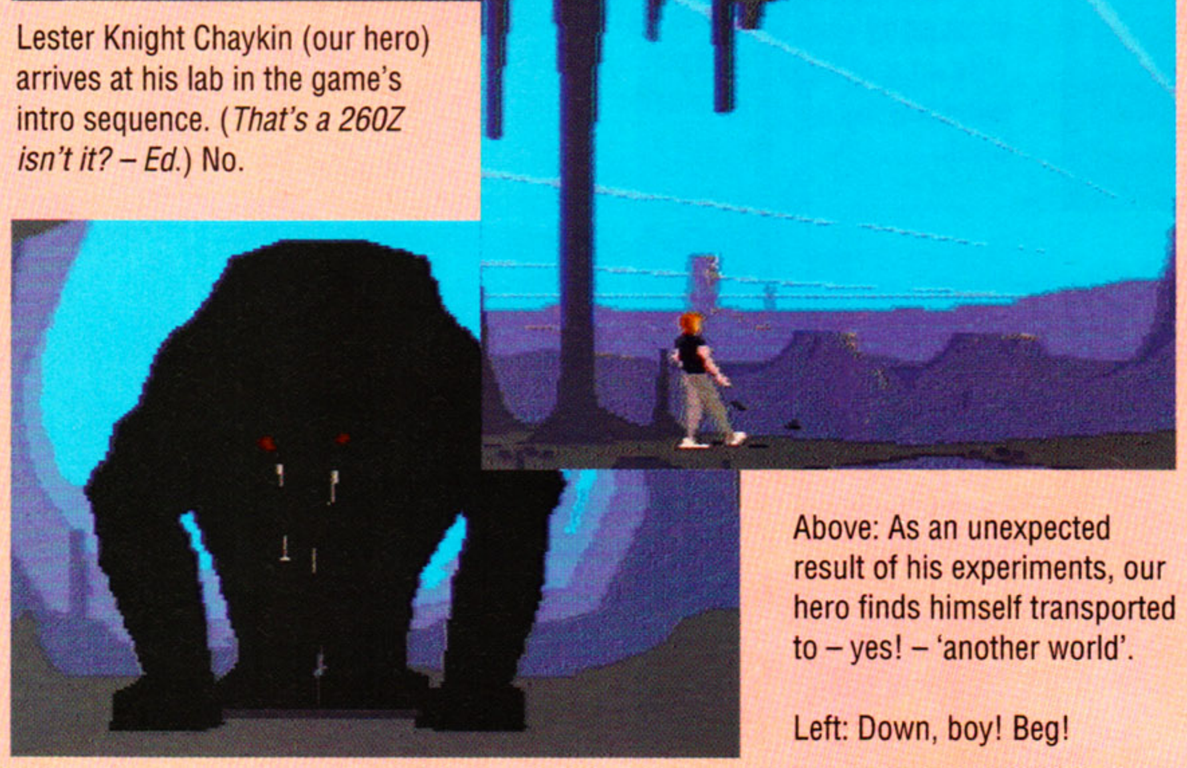
GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
15%	20%	16%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	14%
12%		

VERDICT: Yikes! Where's the scaling graphics? Where's the gameplay? (Where's that receipt?) Not recommended.

ANOTHER WORLD



Lester Knight Chaykin (our hero) arrives at his lab in the game's intro sequence. (*That's a 260Z isn't it? – Ed.*) No.



Above: As an unexpected result of his experiments, our hero finds himself transported to – yes! – 'another world'.

Left: Down, boy! Beg!

UK Release

Game: Another World
Publisher: Interplay
Price: £44.99
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

We reviewed this in issue 1 under it's US name, *Out Of This World*, but is it any different now it's available officially? The answer, simply, is no. *Another World still* represents the state of the art in game animation, and *still* amounts to pretty poor value for money – it's too easy to finish, just as the original Amiga version was.

Despite this, *Another World* is a gorgeous looking and highly enjoyable game, and players of the original will notice that the extra sections from the PC version have been included – Interplay reckon these account for an extra couple of hours of gameplay. The sonics have been vastly improved too – there's a dynamic, impressive and very atmospheric movie-style soundtrack.

Faults? Well, one thing that's disturbed us about the Super Nintendo *Another World* is the slow frame update on certain sections – the Super Nintendo is a slowcoach when it comes to handling polygon animation routines, and the sluggish character response in some sections is extremely frustrating. Still, this is excellent fun while it lasts.

● Jason Brookes

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
89%	92%	81%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	81%
58%		

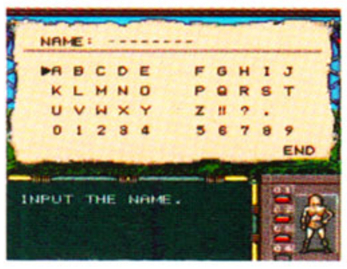
VERDICT: An enjoyable arcade adventure boasting highly original graphics and superb animation. It's a shame there isn't more of it though.

DRAKKHEN

The world of fantasy role-playing games is a mysterious one. Only the brave may enter. (Or people who've been made to do a review.)

UK Release

Game: Drakkhen
Publisher: Infogrames
Developer: In-house
Price: £49.99
Release: January
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit + BB



Before setting off, it's advisable to put together a team. You can pick four characters, giving them each a sex, an occupation, a name, and a range of abilities. Warriors will be best at fighting, magicians at casting spells, etc.

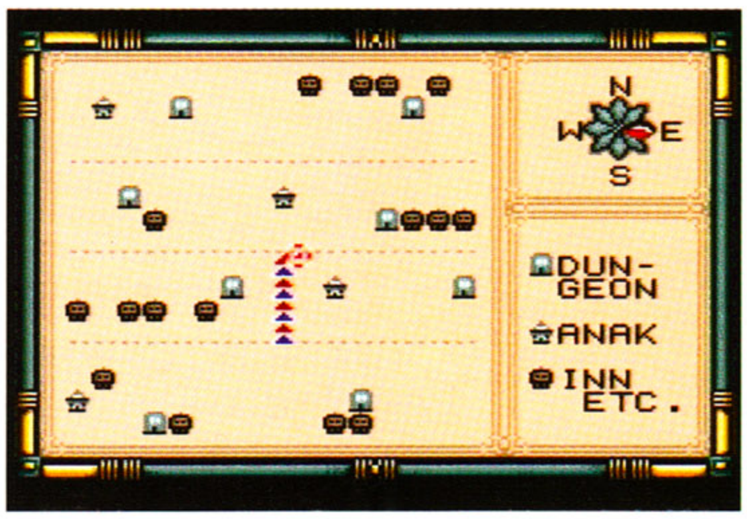
Here we are inside the castle. Michelle left the rest of the gang behind and bumped into this gigantic monster (who, luckily, is friendly – he's called Prince Hordkhen). The game involves wandering from building to building, solving problems, battling with monsters and trying not to fall into lakes. You can pick things up, put them down again, swap your weapons and cast spells. Terrific stuff.

Our all-babe team – Sandra, Michelle, Tracy and Sharon – sets off to see whether this Norse mythology business is all it's cracked up to be. Starting with this castle...

Oh no! Tracy's been consumed by a passing fire-monster, leaving Sharon, Michelle and Sandra to continue on the quest alone.

Phew! Luckily we've found some sort of shrine. The priest-type chap inside has been able to bring Tracy back to life, much to the relief of her chums.

And so our team continue their adventure. Last thing we knew, they were trying to find a prince's sister to give her a message.



Oh yeah, and there's a map you can look at to see where you're going.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Hurrah, I thought, a game based on the popular 1960s Swedish fighter aircraft. (*We checked, and there did actually used to be an aeroplane called the* Drakkhen. *Jonathan has, nonetheless, now been relieved of his duties – Ed.*)

As it turns out, *Drakkhen* is a fantasy role-playing game. I bloody h– (*Hold it! Jonathan is actually huge FRPG fan, aren't you Jonathan? – Ed*) Mggghffgh... (*And he's been looking forward to seeing* Drakkhen *for ages. Isn't that right, Jonathan? – Ed*) Mffghghff... mgmghfgh... (Frantic nodding.) Gasp! Phew! Gasp!

So, er, *Drakkhen*. The name actually means 'dragon' in Swedish (probably) and, logically enough, it's dragons that you be up against during the game. There are four of them, and they're holding the kingdom of... er, well, the kingdom anyway, to ransom. You've got to collect eight gems to break their hold. This is done by wandering around a 3D landscape, visiting buildings and fighting monsters.

It's a really good 3D landscape, actually. It scrolls smoothly and looks really attractive (except when you stop moving, unfortunately, so the screen shots might look a little dull), and it's backed up by some nice stills when you go into buildings and things. There's lots more to the game than it's possible to show here, too. The spell system is pretty comprehensive, and there are lots of objects to, er, do things with. The game is well-paced, too – it never takes long to get from place to place.

In spite of all this, I found the whole thing a little dull. I realise that you have to be a special sort of person to enjoy this stuff, but somehow *Drakkhen* doesn't seem to match up to the best PC and Amiga RPGs. It's neat and it makes a change, but it wasn't able to hold my interest for long. (A little humour might have helped.)

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
76%	53%	57%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
66%		64%

VERDICT: Fantasy role-playing games aren't too common on the SNES (not in English, at any rate), and *Drakkhen* is consequently a welcome release. It's not exactly brilliant, though.

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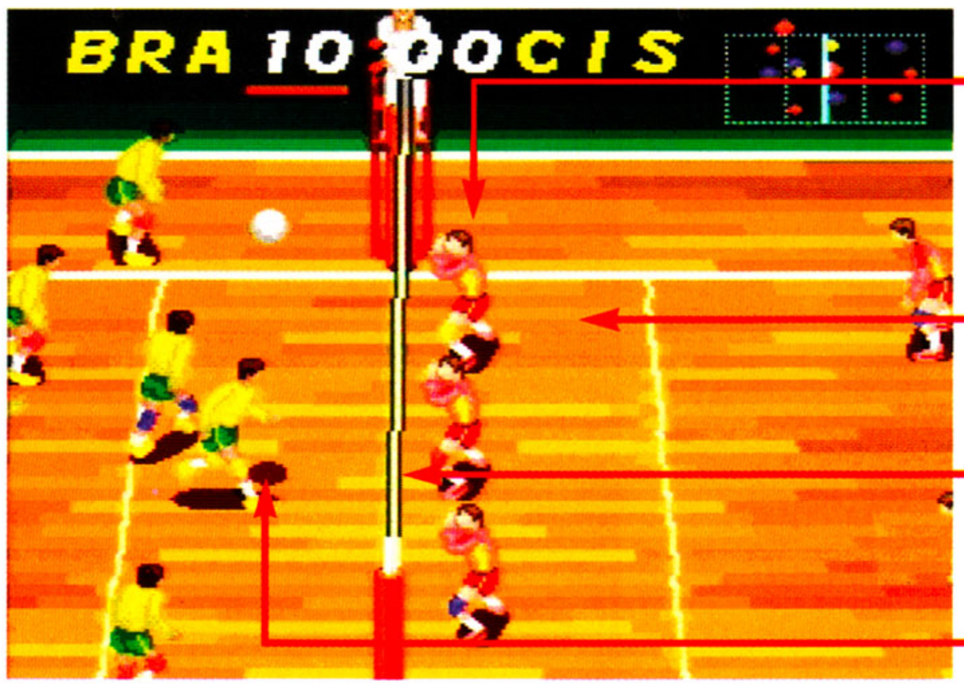
VOLLEYBALL TWIN

Volleyball – yet another sport that's massive in the US and Japan, but just a quick blast on the beach at Marbella for the rest of us – makes it to the Super NES. It's fun, but will *you* want to buy it?

Japanese Release

Game: Volleyball Twin
Publisher: Tonkin House
Developer: In-house
Price: Approx. £50
Release: Out now
Players: 1 or 2
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

The basic point of volleyball, of course, is rather like that of six-a-side tennis (if there were such a thing), except the ball isn't allowed to touch the floor (and the net's taller). Thus play consists of rallies (the same guy can't touch it twice in a row), until one team fumbles it and loses the ball. Score up one point for the other guys.



One of the international teams, this one from the CIS. Hilariously, your front row of three players run around in unison, just like the players in table football.

The court, seemingly made of alternating planks of beech, ash, pine, oak (etc).

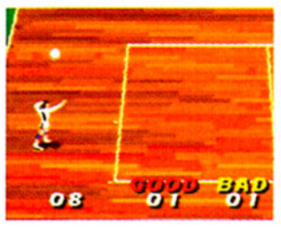
The net. You've got to get the ball over this. (Note, by the way, the wibbly line it makes, a 'benefit' of it all being handled in Mode 7.)

Best way to track the ball is by the shadow it casts on the court.

INTERNATIONAL

These are the serious matches, played between international teams (you're give a choice of eight top volleyball nations, from the United States to... Algeria?) of six per side on an indoor court. The game is presented in Mode 7, and swivels slightly as the screen scrolls from left to right. You can play against the computer, against a pal, or with two of you on the same team.

BEACH VOLLEY



A sort of lightweight, fun version of the same thing, the big difference being a) that it's on a beach, b) that there are only two a side, and c) that all the players are what can only be described as swimsuit-clad babes. (The teams have names like 'Melon Gals', 'Coconuts,' 'Cherry Pie' et al.) The other pic shows the training mode, by the way.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Yes, you did read the name right – *Volleyball Twin* has been put together by Tonkin House who developed *Super Tennis*, still perhaps the best Super Nintendo sports game of them all. That being the case, you'd expect this to be a stunningly good sports game – especially since, as both games consist of people batting balls back and forth across a net, you'd think they could put their *Super Tennis* experience to good use. What a disappointment, then, that this turned out to be, if not exactly bad, then certainly very much a lesser game.

The main problem, it would seem, is that volleyball is a fairly limited sport at the best of times, so no version of it is very likely to *really* get the blood flowing. That said, Tonkin House have done their best to make it work on the Super NES. For a start, they've given you two distinct gameplay options – the full six-a-side international matches, and two-player beach volley games outlined elsewhere on this page.

Short of full, *Super Soccer*-style presentation – actually putting you on a 3D volleyball court – it's hard to see what else you could do with the game. (That said, I can't help wondering how an almost-overhead view might have worked. The game could, presumably, have been made rather faster – and possibly choosing between players would have been easier – if things had been handled that way. Looks like we'll never know, eh?)

What this really lacks, to be honest, are those few extra bits of tweaking that would have really made the game. Chief amongst these is that the scrolling is a bit slow, giving you precious little time to position your players, once they've actually scrolled on screen, to defend against any attack. Less of a problem, but still slightly annoying, is the way the game's Mode 7 means there's hardly a straight line on the entire court, just a lot of jagged edges, which looks less than attractive. Some more, and slightly less silly looking, animation would have been nice too.

Still, it's not much to complain about, is it? *Volleyball Twin* is great as far as it goes, but surely you must be thinking in terms of 10 or so other sports sims before you even begin to get around to this one. Or have I completely misjudged everything again?

● Matt Bielby

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
78%	72%	77%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
75%		76%

VERDICT: Perfectly decent two-player volleyball game that could have been made better, but really suffers from the simple fact that it's about volleyball. Great for fans, and playable (though not essential) for the rest of us.

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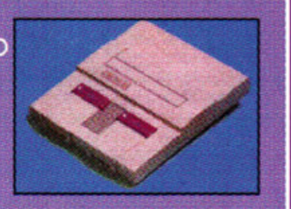

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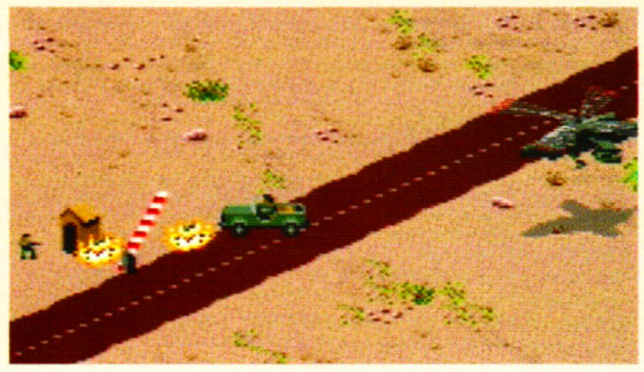
DESERT STRIKE

UK Release

Game: Desert Strike
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: EA In-house
Price: £44.99
Release: January
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

A game involving industrial action by Angel Delights, Saucy Sponges and Blancmanges might not... (*This is your last chance. I really mean it this time – Ed.*) *Desert Strike* is a helicopter-based Mega Drive conversion.

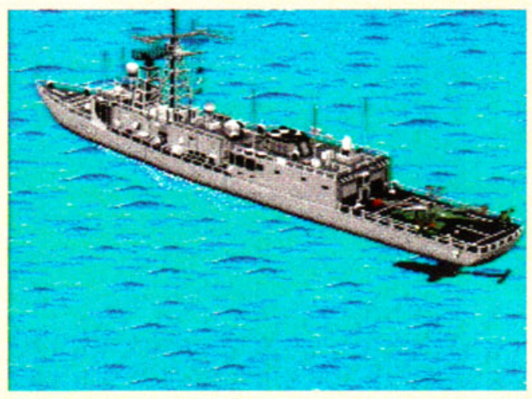
That's your helicopter over on the left, rotor blades spinning and cannons blazing. And that looks horribly like an enemy tank sneaking in on the right.



Never tell a man the car-park's full when he's flying an AH-64 Apache with lots of missiles.

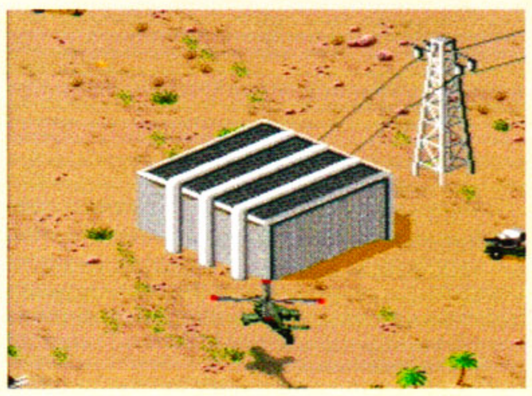
The intro weaves a tale of Middle Eastern intrigue, with hostage-taking, oil spillages, shifty baddies and lots and lots of sand.

On the first mission, take off from your ship, anchored just offshore...



...attack three radar stations, watching out for the defending guns...

...take out a power station, and the missile launchers that guard it...



...waste a couple of airfields, trying not to laugh at the crap perspective...

...capture an enemy commander, who'll tell you where your spy is...

...and fly back to your ship. Phew.

RADAR ATTACK

1 Blow up the first defending gun with your missiles...

2 ...and the second one as well (hoping it didn't notice Step 1.).

3 Then lay into the radar with your machine gun (saving your missiles).

4 And – bang! That's it.

DESERT STRIKE: HOW IT ALL WORKS

Pressing START brings up this multi-role map/stats screen. Not only is it jolly useful for getting you safely through your missions, but it's also a good way to explain how the game works.

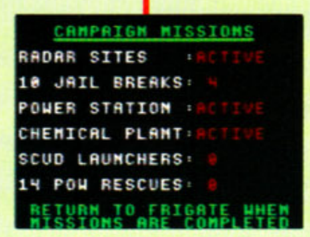
In theory your guns have limited ammo, but in practice they never run out. So, only use missiles as a last resort.

Hydra missiles are best for taking out gun emplacements and Rapier launchers quickly, when you're under fire.

You'll need to keep an eye on your fuel consumption, obviously. If it starts running low, go look for some fuel drums.

Save Hellfire missiles for moving targets like armoured cars and tanks. Don't waste them on anything else, as you only have a limited supply.

Your armour is depleted when you get hit by ground fire, or crash into things. Pick up armour repair kits to restore it, or take MIAs back to your base (where your mechanics will be able to help).



'Status' mode tells you how you're getting on: which missions you've completed, and which ones, er, you haven't yet.

MIAs can be found roaming the desert, or huddling in the remains of enemy buildings you've destroyed. Return them to a friendly boat in exchange for extra armour. (*You just said that – Ed.*)

You get points for blowing up enemy positions – that much is obvious – but you'll also lose them if you kill civilians or any of your own troops by mistake.

The map (displayed) shows the whole playing area, indicating your targets and the locations of extra fuel, ammunition etc.

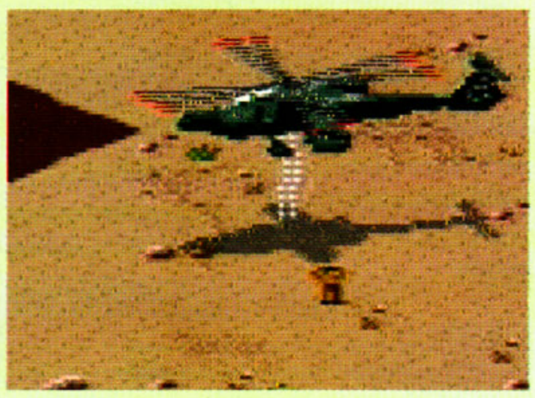
You're given several objectives on each mission, which really ought to be completed in the specified order. (Or, er, else.)

CHEMICAL WEAPONS PLANT
ARMOR: 300
4. THE MADMAN PLANS TO ARM HIS SCUDS WITH CHEMICAL WEAPONS. DESTROY THIS PLANT TO PREVENT THE USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS.

Switch to 'mission' mode, and you'll be given more detailed information on each of your missions (in case you weren't listening properly in the briefing). You also be able to find out how heavily armoured each target is – ie how long it's going to take to finish it off.

RESCUING A MIA – IT'S EASY

1 How to rescue an MIA: First, Kill the baddy who's chasing him.

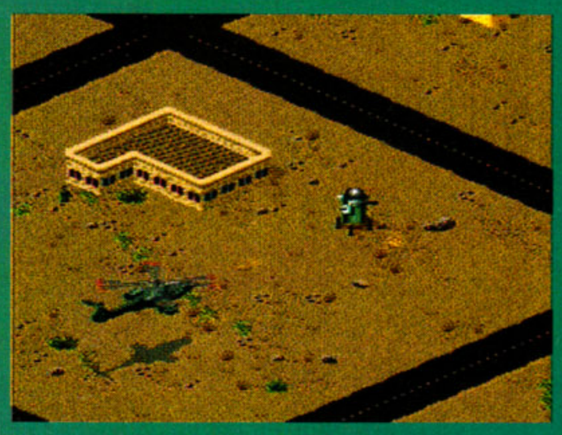


2 Winch him up into the 'safety' (ahem) of your helicopter.

3 And drop him off at the boat, to a rapturous welcome.

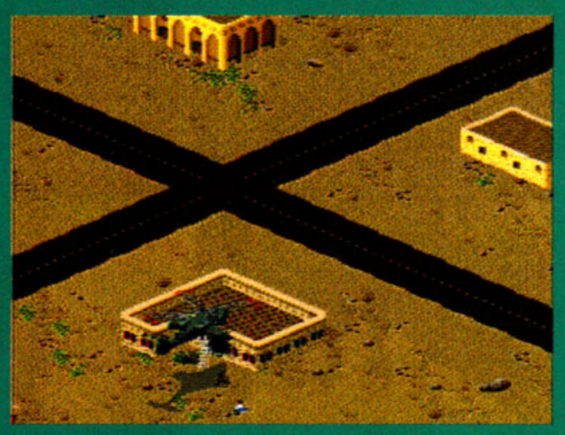
Chocka-chocka-chocka. (*Yes, thank you JD, that's enough – Ed.*)

ASSIST A JAILBREAK

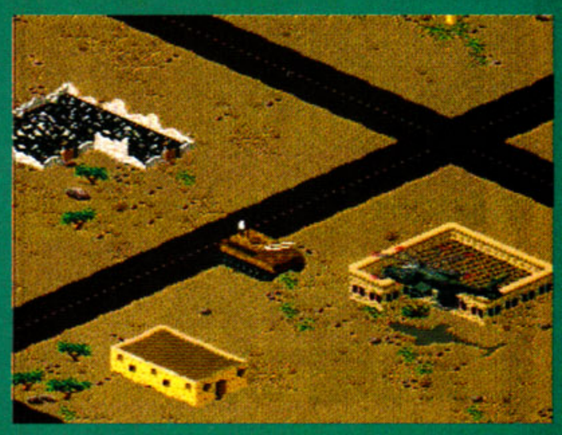


1 How to bust out POWs: Clear away any defending guns and troops.

2 Blow a hole in the prison wall for the prisoners to sneak out through.



3 Winch up the prisoners: one, two, three, four....



4 Erm...

If you get as far as the third stage (which, um, we haven't quite managed to do yet – this pic's from the demo) (at least we're honest) you'll find yourself weaving between tower blocks in Baghdad.

There's oil in them, er, dunes. On the fourth (and last) stage, you've got to try and stop the Ira... baddies (hem, hem) from spilling oil all over the place. You've also got to airlift some commandos.

Eek! A giant tank! We're all going to die! (Actually it's all right – it's on our side.)

Here our brave heros have parked their helicopter (not very well, admittedly) and are making the most of the sunshine.

5 Oh crumbs.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Helicopters are such brilliant things. You can do really impressive things in them, like hiding behind clumps of trees, and suddenly rising up out of them in a huge cloud of dust. Or circling around an enemy position, spraying it with bullets. There's that wonderful 'chocka-chocka-chocka' noise they make – helicopter pilots must have a real job restraining themselves from going 'chocka-chocka-chocka' as they're flying around. And I think it's so great the way they just sort of 'hang there' off their rotor blades, looking down at you.

They're so brilliant, in fact, that it's a wonder there aren't more helicopter games on the SNES. At the last count, not including *Desert Strike*, there was a grand total of absolutely none at all. (Unless you count the helicopter levels of *Pilotwings*, or not-very-helicoptery-at-all games like *Super SWIV*, which isn't even out yet.) When you consider that there are 62 games with spaceships in, 22 with cars, 13 with aeroplanes, 4 with tanks, 3 with boats and 1* with a bicycle, this is a pretty sorry state of affairs.

Luckily, *Desert Strike* more than makes up for all those years of helicopter neglect. It's an absolutely fantastic game, and it's got the best helicopter I think I've ever seen. *Desert Strike*'s helicopter is how all helicopters ought to be – a nice dark-green colour (not much use in the desert, but it looks great); big, spinny rotor blades; and a devastating selection of weaponry. Best of all, though, it really moves like a helicopter. Its nose tips down when it moves forwards, and up again when it stops. It tilts gently from side to side when it turns, and looks perfectly poised when it hovers. The controls, too, are perfect: the helicopter looks incredibly impressive as it weaves and slides about, yet at the same time you always feel in complete control of it.

So, helicopter-wise, *Desert Strike* is spot on. Ten out of ten on the old helicopter-o-meter. But how about the rest of it? The graphics, for example?

Being set in a desert, *Desert Strike* clearly doesn't have much scope for flashy Mode 7 graphics. Those sand dunes would have looked a bit silly spinning round and zooming in and out of the screen, so they stay right where they are and just quietly scroll about the place. The buildings and things look okay – not breathtaking, but they get the job done. Where the graphics start to get good is in the military hardware division. The tanks and guns are smashing – really mean-looking – and the ship at the beginning is a nautical triumph. And *Desert Strike* excels in the detail department, the really tiny bits that other games wouldn't bother about. The little people that you rescue are fab (even if they do walk rather oddly), the ammo crates really look like ammo crates, and the camels are simply the business.

How about actually playing it? Is it any fun? Oh yes. *Desert Strike* is fun all right. I think I've probably had more fun playing *Desert Strike* over the last few days than I had in the whole of 1986. But why?

Well, at the lowest level there's the sheer thrill of flying around in a helicopter blowing things up. It really does feel like that's what you're doing. (It's a shame the explosions are a bit weedy, though.)

Then there's the tactical level. Do you try to take out the guns guarding the prison first, so you can rescue the prisoners at your leisure, or do you risk everything and wade right on in. When dangerously low on fuel, do you try to pick up the fuel drums before attacking the missile launcher next to it, or do you do it the other way round?

Finally there's the strategic (eek) side. Do you stick to your brief and take out all three radar sites before attacking the power station, or – knowing there's an armour-repair crate under the power station – do you leave the radar sites till later? Or... well, you get the idea.

What it all adds up to is an immensely enjoyable and absorbing game that's excellent value for money. Four missions might not sound like an awful lot, but each one is huge and will take you ages to complete.

Faults? There *are* one or two. The most obvious is slow-down, which occurs when loads is happening on the screen. It's very annoying when it happens, but you quickly forget about it once it's stopped. So that's okay. The collision detection is the other biggie – things don't always get shot when you think they should be. This could be put down to the varying skills of your co-pilot, but I'm not so sure. Finally, I got bored of just having three weapons – some collectable homing missiles might have been nice.

(Sorry, this is getting a bit out of hand, isn't it? I was going to just do one of those two-column jobs, but I got to the bottom of the second column and couldn't stop. I've gone out of control! Help!)

As for the game's likely lastability, well, I know that if I tell you it's really difficult some smart Alec will write in and say he finished it on his second go. But *I* found it really, really hard. I still haven't managed to complete the second mission, though I've been playing it for days. Still, the great thing is that, no matter how often I got killed, I never once got all annoyed and cross and started breaking things (like usually happens with games I can't do). Each time I died, I accepted defeat with dignity, and had another go. Plus (plus! plus!) *Desert Strike* is one of those games that's so playable, and so 'non-linear' (if you know what I mean), that even if you do finish it on your second go, you'll never get bored of playing it. You'll keep finding new things to do, and it's just so much fun flying round blowing things up.

If you've read this far, a summing-up-at-the-end bit seems superfluous. But I'll never get to the end of this huge box otherwise, so here goes. *Desert Strike* is simply brilliant. While it's not that impressive on the technical side, and doesn't do anything (obviously) that a weedy Mega Drive couldn't do, it's just so 'there' that it doesn't matter. I'd recommend it to anybody. Can I do my 'chopper' joke now? (*No – Ed.*)

● Jonathan Davies

*All figures are, of course, approximate.

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
82%	68%	92%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	90%
88%		

VERDICT: A truly fabulous game which, prejudices notwithstanding, should be just as popular on the Super Nintendo as it was on the Mega Drive. It really hits the nail on the head, and shows that Electronic Arts *can* do it on the Super NES after all.

Thanks to Shekhana Consoles, (061) 340 8565, for lending us the cart.

ANOTHER WORLD

SUPER PLAYER'S GUIDE

THE COMPLETE SOLUTION

By Rich Pelley

A complete solution is a complete solution because not only is it a solution to a game, it is also a complete one. (*You're sailing close to the wind... – Ed.*) Ahem. Anyway, the game in question here is *Another World*, a big hit for Delphine on the Amiga, and since developed for the PC, until finally it has made it here, to the Super Nintendo. (We review *Another World* on page 56.)

In *Another World* (US name: *Out of This World*) you play a young, dashing scientist on the brink of an important discovery. One stormy night you arrive at your lab, about to make your big breakthrough, when a stray lightning bolt rocks the whole building, causing a short circuit, an explosion, and ripping a hole in the very fabric of space, propelling you into (another world)...

SECTION I

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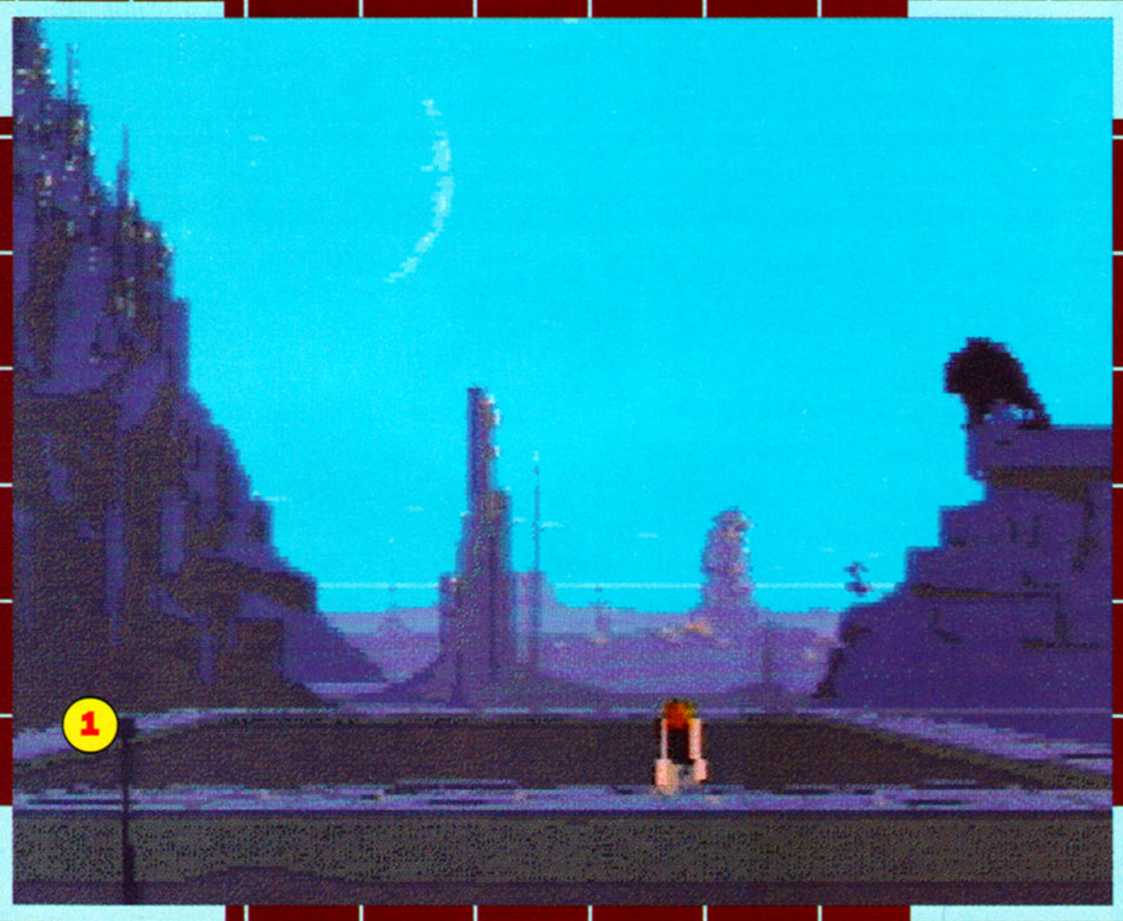
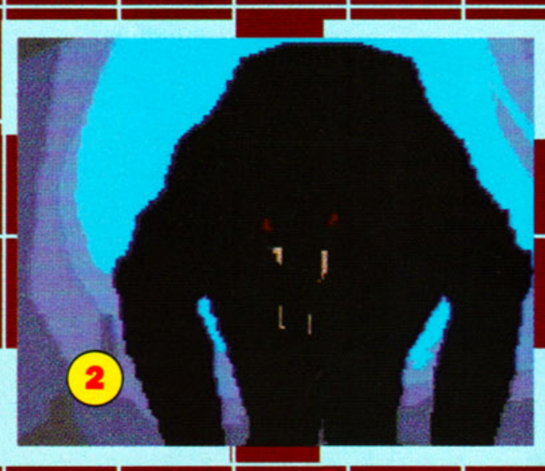
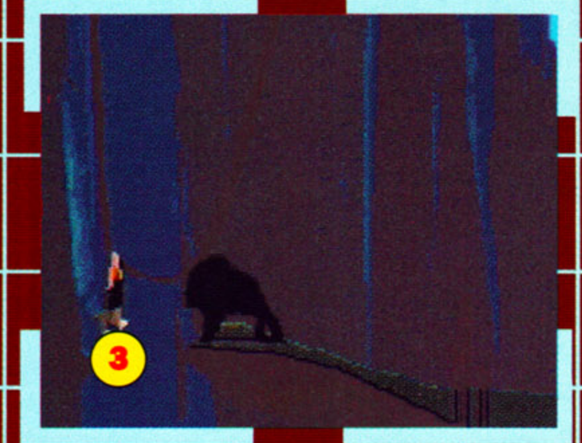


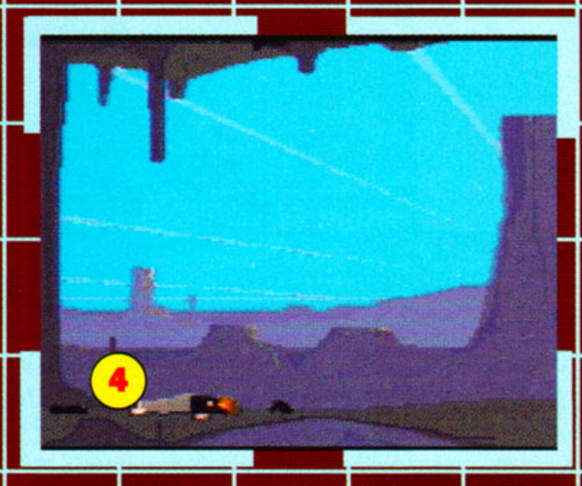
One minute you're having a quiet can of cola in the lab and the next – zap – you're underwater and in Another World. Quickly swim towards the surface and out, before tentacles drag you down, then head right. Ignore the slugs on the ceilings, but kick all the others to clear a path – you'll be running back along here in a minute, and you don't want to be nipped on the leg in the process.



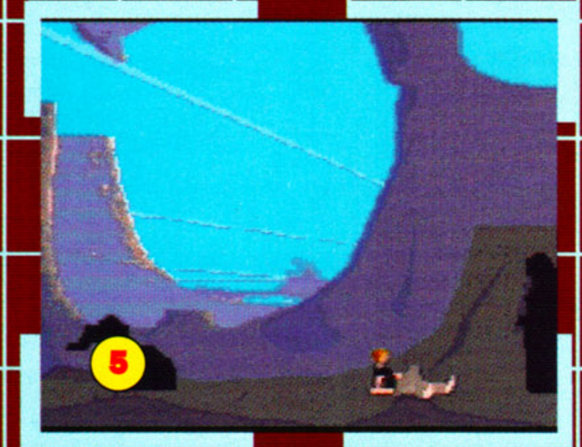
Yikes, watch out for him..!



Run as fast as possible to the left, jumping as you go, while the Beast chases you. Go past the pool and leap onto the vine. The vine should break, enabling you to swing over the Beast, giving you a chance to make a get away.



Whoops! You've tripped.



Don't worry, though – you'll be saved by aliens and the Beast will be no more.

SECTION II

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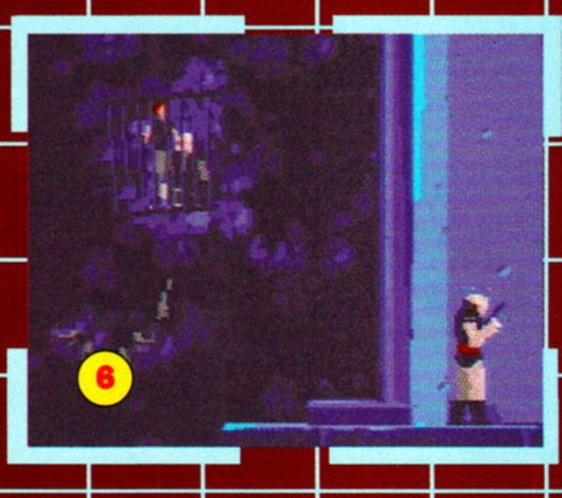
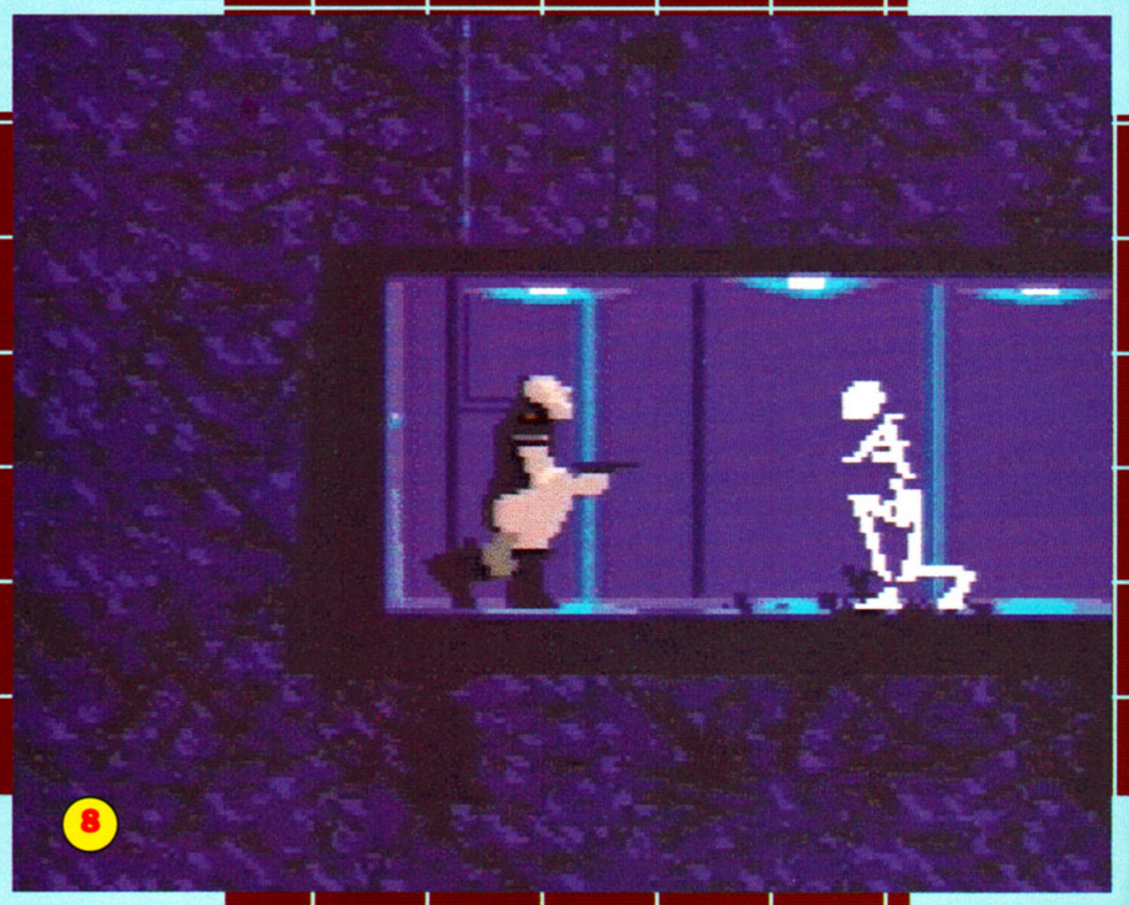
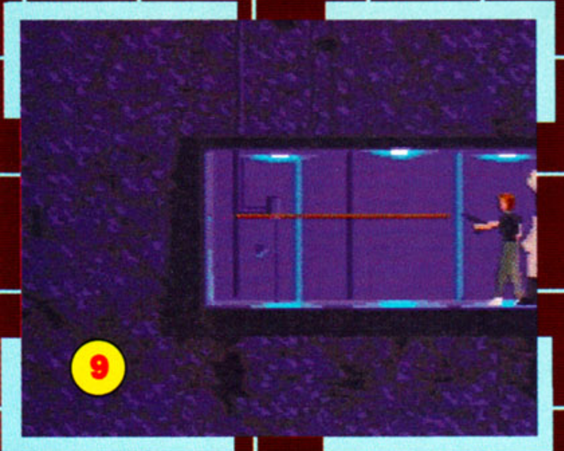


You've been imprisoned in a cage by aliens. Rock the cage to and fro until it falls and lands on the guard's head. Pick up the gun, follow your friend (the alien trapped with you) to the right, and shoot the guard the instant he appears.

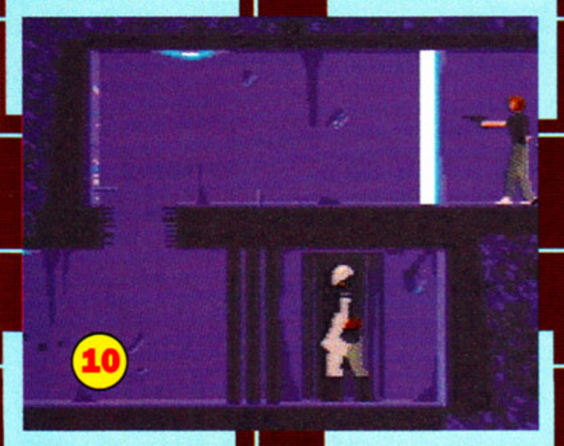
Run to the right, then create two shields to protect yourself and your friend whilst he unlocks the door to the lift. Don't bother trying to shoot the guard, though, as you'll only get yourself killed. Take the lift up for a rather natty animation sequence, then take it back down as far as it will go. Watch out for the baddy guarding the door at the end of the corridor...



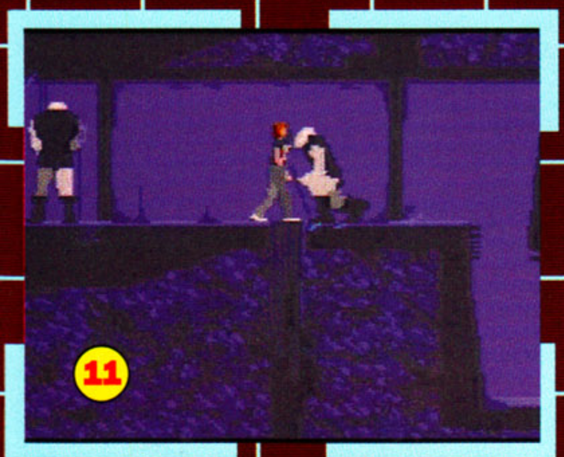
Oops! That's torn it... You're dead.



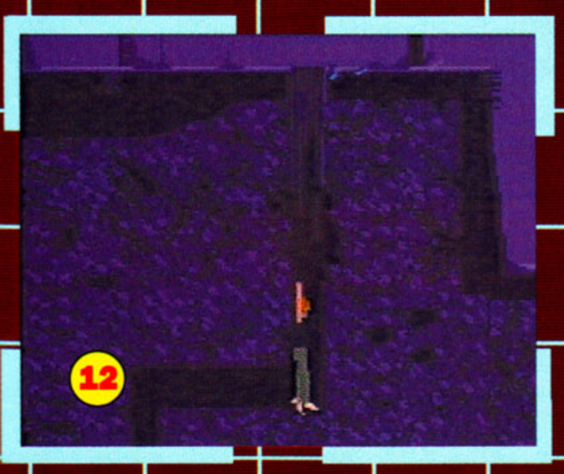
...then shoot out the small flashing light on the end wall, and take the lift up one level.



Shoot the door blocking your way with a large blast from your gun, then quickly teleport down and run left before the alien below has a chance to shoot.



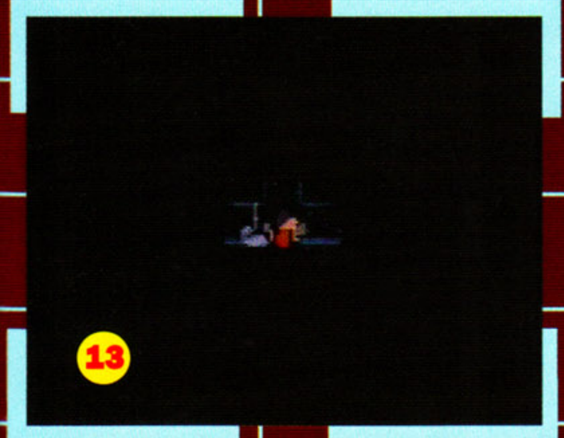
Walk to the next screen, then teleport up, and with any luck your friend should now appear...



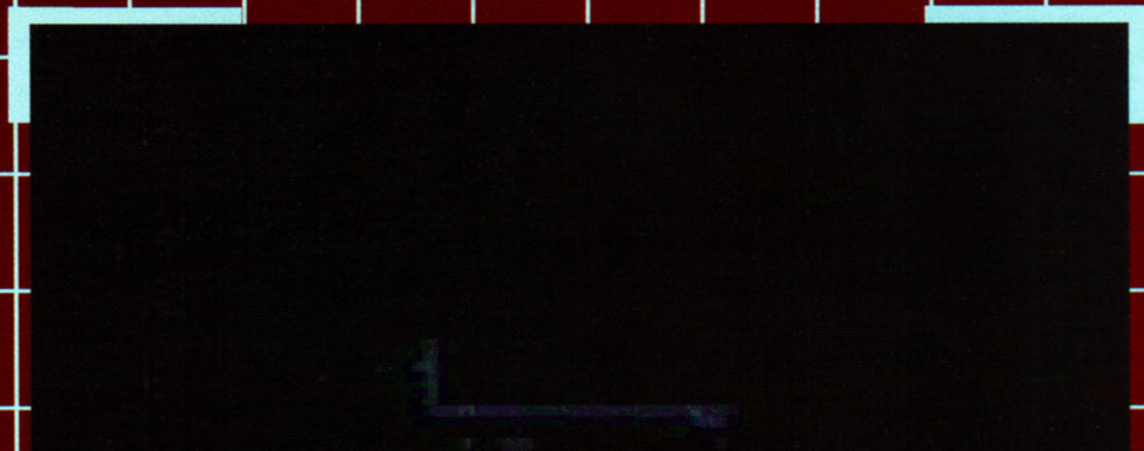
... he'll then open this hatch for you.

SECTION III

ACCESS CODE CLLD



The route through the pipes is left and drop, right and drop, right and drop, left and drop and back right and drop to end.



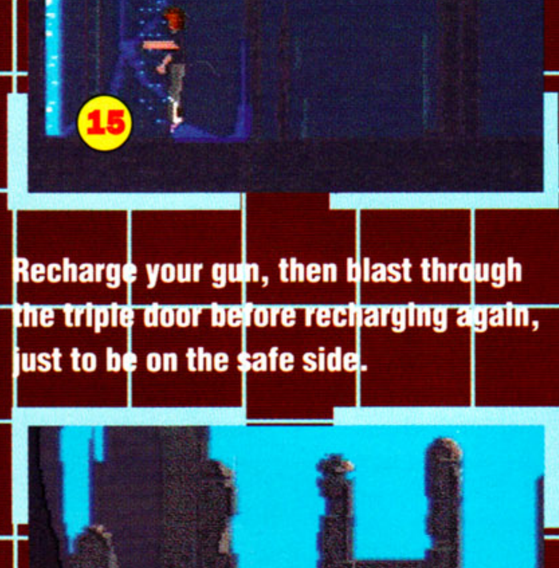
The only hazards are the spurts of gas, but provided you take it all fairly slowly (then rush quickly to pass them), they shouldn't pose any real problem. Unlike they did for this poor chap...

SECTION IV

ACCESS CODE LBKG

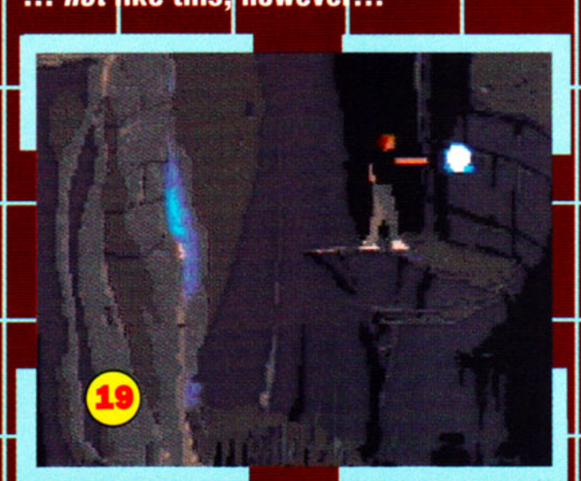
Recharge your gun, then blast through the triple door before recharging again, just to be on the safe side.

Run right and shoot the guard...



...then walk to the end of this broken bridge. The secret here is to jump out as far as you possibly can. If you do this correctly, you'll land on a ledge below the broken bridge...

... *not* like this, however...



That's more like it. Having successfully landed on the ledge and avoided the nasty spikes that lie in wait below, now blast a hole in the wall of rock and go through it.

Shoot the rock away to find the exit.

SECTION V

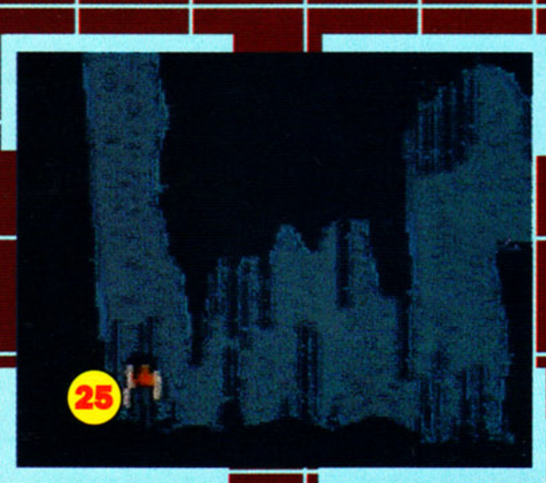
ACCESS CODE XDDJ

Take the first shaft to the right, and the next to the right, to land on a rock – use this to get back up at the end of this bit. Jump the blue spikes in the room to the right, then go on, remaining still when you enter the next screen.

Soon after you enter the screen, a large rock will fall to your right. Run to the small spike at the right of the screen. Two more rocks will fall to your right – wait until the second hits the ground and then run and jump past them.

Oh dear, something went horribly wrong!

Wait for the second rock to be falling behind the first, run to the gap, then run past the third rock and the tentacle all in one go. On the next screen, run under the tentacles and continue your running jump to bound over the first chewer. Jump the remaining chewers individually with a normal jump, then it's onto the next screen.



Shoot the tentacles and jump the chewer with a normal jump, using a running jump to clear the other two in one go.

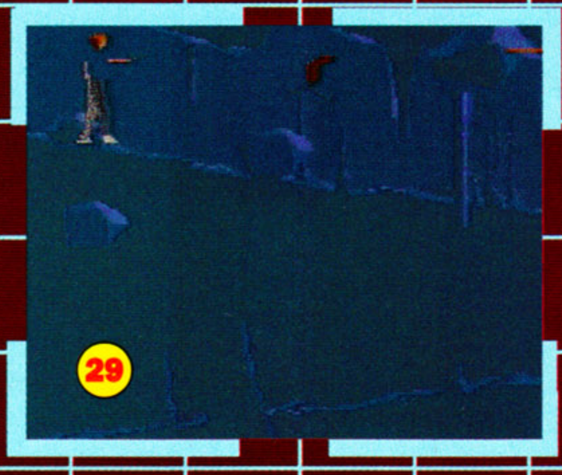
Go onto the next screen, and stand on the edge of the gap to jump it. Then jump the chewer, continue right and blast the door open. This will allow the underground caverns to fill with water a little later into the game.

SECTION VI

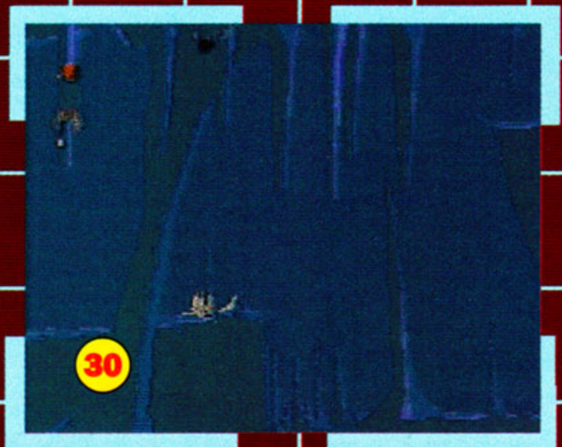
ACCESS CODE FXLC

You are going to have to make your way back to the big rock now. Jump the chewer and the pit, then shoot the chewers on the next screen. A running jump is needed to clear the first two chewers in one, but in this case you'll have to jump slightly before you reach them (otherwise you will leap right into the third chewer).

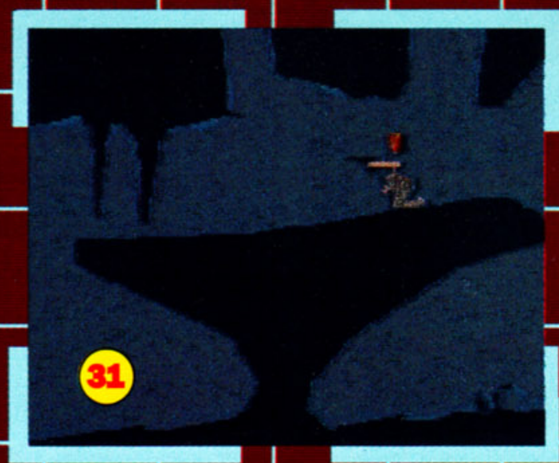
Whoops.



Jump the first chewer and go left to the falling rocks. Take the upper path. Kill the bat and go into the next room...



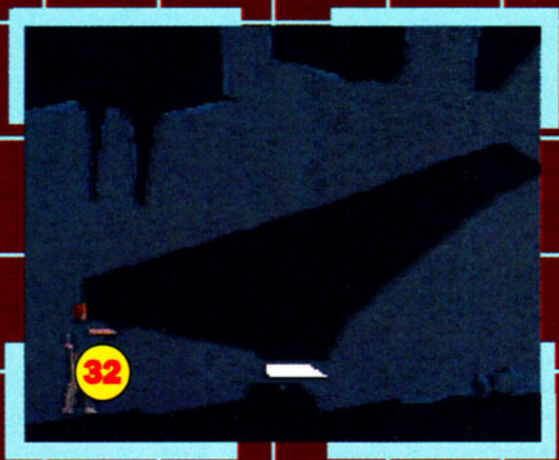
... where it will be stuck in tentacles. Climb up a stalactite, then jump along...



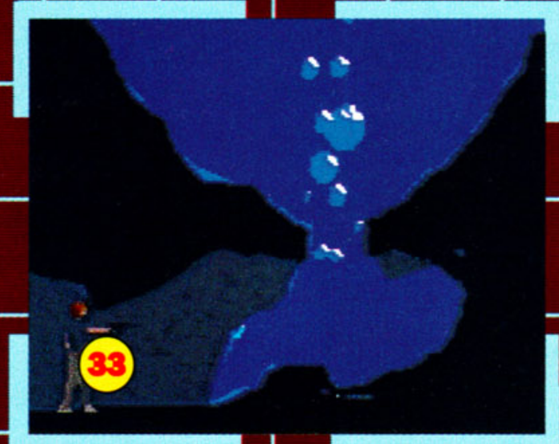
...and off the furthermost left stalactite off the screen, You'll now be back onto the big rock.

SECTION VII

ACCESS CODE KRFK



Blast the left side of the support so that it topples over in such a way that you can climb back up to the level above.



A few screens to the right you'll be underneath a large pool of water. Charge up your gun, and as soon as you have fired a laser bolt at the support, leg it left, jumping the pits.

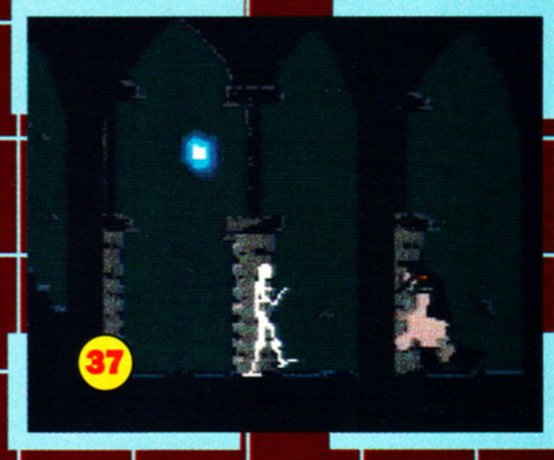
Oh damn!

To the far left there is a small stone pad – the pressure of the water will force it upwards into the next level.

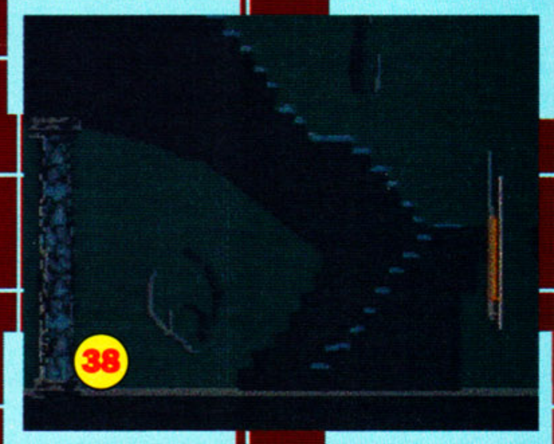
SECTION VIII

ACCESS CODE KLFB

Don't worry about your trapped friend yet. Take a right and go down the steps and shoot the guard.



Before he shoots you. Whoops!



Go right again, down the steps and teleport down, killing the guard to the left as you do so.

Further along to the left, aim a laser beam at the light chain – it will fall to the ground, allowing your friend above to escape.

You will be knocked back by a guard. When he picks you up, kick him between the legs, then run to pick up your gun and shoot him. On the screen to the right, create a couple of shields behind you, so that when the next two guards appear you can immediately take care of the front one before safely disposing of the one to your rear.

Next month: The final four sections of *Another World*. Can you wait? (And will you have worked them out by yourself in the meantime anyway?) Only another month can tell...

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CACOMA KNIGHT

Japanese Release

Game: Cacoma Knight
Publisher: Datam
Price: Approx £45
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit

A colourful Japanese-style intro – one of the game's stronger points.

Left: Your character is the little blue thing in the middle at the bottom. Parts of the screen fill with colour as you box off them off. Exciting eh?

Right: One of the 'filled-in' screens, looking a lot prettier than it did before. Bonuses like these boxes of treasure appear after the screen has been filled to give you extra points.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

The games on which *Cacoma Knight* is based – *Qix*, *Painter*, even *Volfied* – are so old that I bet half of you don't remember them. Those that do will know that while drawing lines to cordon off ever larger sections of a screen can be mildly enjoyable, it's hardly ground-breaking stuff. Boredom sets in early – no matter how many ways you can die.

Datam's last contribution to the Super Famicom was a dire one (the platform scroller *Musya*), though happily things *have* improved marginally with *Cacoma Knight*. The bright Japanese graphics and cutsy sound you get here are very PC Engine-like, the problem being that behind the attractive presentation you'll find little substance. The gameplay starts off simply, but within about six rounds begins to get tedious. The main problem is that enemy sprites barge into the lines you draw, disabling your movement and leaving you open to attack far too often. You'll quickly discover that this it isn't any fun, and there are many better ways to spend £45!

● Jason Brookes

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
64%	68%	38%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	36%
34%		

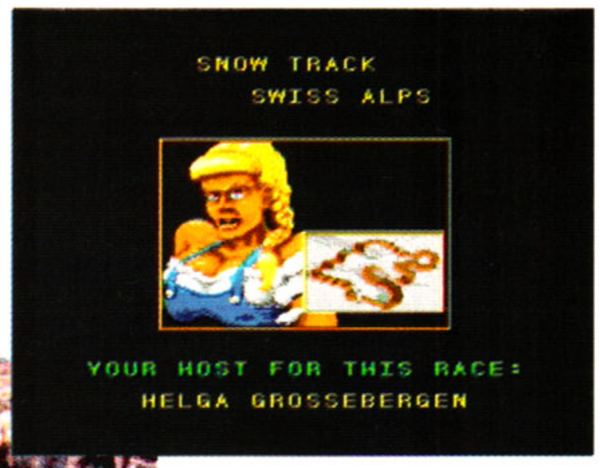
VERDICT: You'd have to be bonkers to fork out £45 for this. If drawing right angles is your passion, buy a couple of pencils and a set square.

ROAD RIOT 4WD

Above: It might look like a truckies' answer to *Mario Kart*, but see it moving and you'll change your mind.

US Release

Game: Road Riot 4WD
Publisher: THQ
Price: Approx £45
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit



Above: Each country you visit has its own 'host'. Here we have Helga Grossebergen (that's Helga 'Big Mountains' for the non-German speakers out there). No, I didn't laugh either.
Left: Believe me when I say getting this far is *very* easy.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

'It's a split-screen driving game like *Mario Kart*,' I told Matt, passing it to him to review. He *almost* fell for it – until he spotted THQ on the box, and I found the game landing back on my desk with a resounding thump. You could see his point – last month they were responsible for *Race Drivin'* (35%), *James Bond Jr* (29%), *Home Alone* (34%) and *Home Alone 2* (32%), while this month's other contribution is the dreadful *Pitfighter*.

And, inevitably, this is very sad, especially for me – I'm a great fan of buggy games. *Stunt Car Racer* and *Buggy Boy* on the Amiga are two of my faves and, of course, *Mario Kart* is perfection on wheels. In contrast, *Road Riot* isn't fit to inflate their sand tyres. Though it boasts good colour and some tolerable music, the jerky graphics are horrible – this is one of those confusing messes of digitised 3D spites and undulating landscapes that wouldn't have looked out of place running on a ST back in 1987. Throw in some awful speech, some unappealing characters and a non-existent difficulty curve, and you have probably the worst driving game yet on the SNES. The time it takes to complete it is a totally fun-free experience.

● Jason Brookes

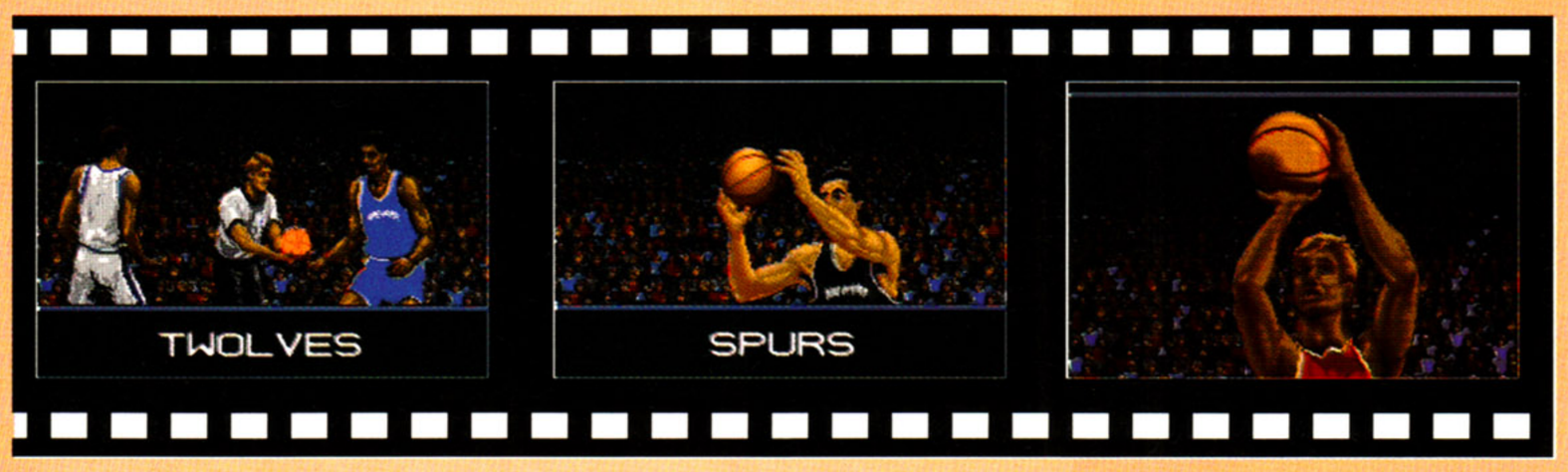
GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
24%	42%	23%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	20%
16%		

VERDICT: Buy this instead of *Mario Kart* and we'll send the boys round. The worst driving game on the Super NES by miles.

Thanks to Game On, (081) 856 5282, for lending us this cart.

SUPER NBA BASKETBALL

Whether you love or hate the game, it doesn't really matter. With *Super NBA Basketball*, Tecmo have come up with a brilliant two-player sports game that deserves everybody's attention...



Japanese Release

Game: Super NBA Basketball
Publisher: Tecmo
Developer: In-house
Price: Approx. £50
Release: Out now
Players: 1 or 2
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

Before you actually start to play, a whole assortment of intro scenes appear (featuring what seems like all the top teams in the American league). We've printed a few of them here, just to get you in the mood for the rest of the review...

In case you think from the rest of these pictures that you only get the two All Star teams to control, that's not the case. There are plenty of league sides on offer too, for a (slightly) less skilled basketball experience. (Indeed, you can play the whole game as a league.)

After the other side has scored, you get to start your attack like this. One of your players, forced to stand on the base line, throws the ball towards one of his ready-to-run-forward team-mates.

You'll see throw-ins pretty often in the game. Here the player with the little number 1 above his head is about to take the throw, with about three effective team-mates he can go for.

OOPS! SOMETHING'S WRONG...

There are loads of rules in basketball, and if you don't know what you're doing it's easy to break them – if you're not familiar with the game (and even if you are) you'll be seeing quite a lot of this referee guy, I'm sure. Ways in which you can do wrong are legion: take more than five seconds for a throw in, knock over members of the other team, obstruct an opposition player with the ball, run back into your half of the court by mistake, (etc, etc). It cuts both ways though – you get one of these free throws at the net if someone fouls you when you're in position to score.

BUT ISN'T BASKETBALL REALLY BORING AND REPETITIVE?

Well, that's what I thought. But, once I actually started playing it, I discovered how wrong I was.

The first thing I learned is that basketball is fast. Once you've got the ball, and are about to make an attacking run, there are very tight time limits imposed. From your base line you get six seconds to take the ball across the centre line, and you have to score within 24. You're only allowed five seconds every time you take a throw in too. So, the rules force play into a set attack, defend, attack, defend pattern. It's once you've got used to this that you see the skill.

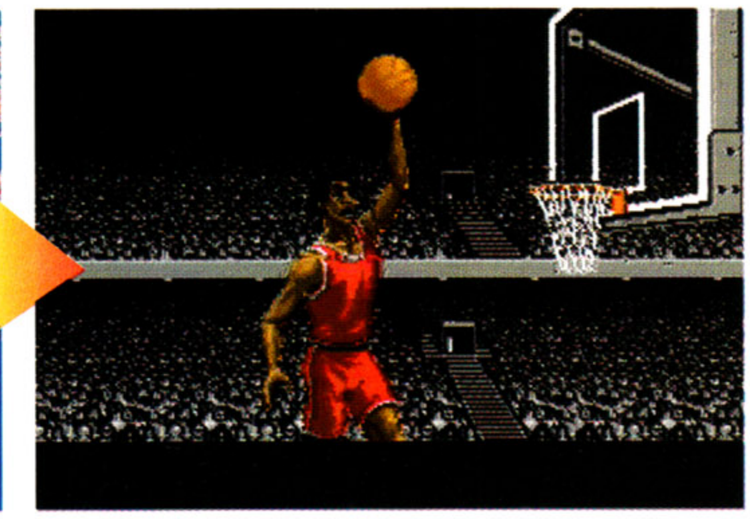
Losing in basketball is a nightmare. In five minutes you can find the score has gone from 4-2 to 48-24, with no chance of catching up. In real professional basketball the result is often around 102-112. However, if one of the teams is that bit worse than the other, scores like 120-24 (!) are possible.

SCORING BASKETS (AND HOW TO DO IT)

Here's a player about to score. He's close enough to the basket, the angle's looking good – with any luck it will go in.

Oh no! The ball rattles around the edge. It may go in, it may flop out. It'd be a good idea to get another guy placed to catch it and take another shot if need be.

Now this is class! A dunk shot makes certain the ball goes in, but you have to get yourself right next to the basket to manage it.



And it's in! Though it doesn't happen all the time, this animation sometimes flashes up to prove you've done it, and to rub defeat in the other guy's face.

Between periods you get this sort of (ahem) entertainment. The animation on these dancing cheerleaders is actually quite good, truth to tell, though aren't they all a little small compared to the audience sitting in the rows behind them?

Not every shot makes it. This one bounced off the backboard and has been caught by a well placed defender. Allow this to happen too many times (it's called a 'turn around' when you fail to score, by the way) and you'll be on a losing streak for sure.

STATS, STATS AND MORE STATS

Just like all the best sports games, this comes packed with masses of real-life stat screens, containing information that (in so much as we could tell) actually has some bearing on the way players perform on court. You get details of real players – you can see the famous Larry Bird on the right – as well as oodles of teams to pick between.

Not only that, you get to pick set plays, almost like in American Football. (There's a whole load of them below). Management game freaks will be in their element (indeed, the game even allows you to play this side of things if you want!).

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

TECMO SUPER NBA BASKETBALL

This might be a sports game packed issue, but you won't find football, cricket or rugby featured. No, one of the disadvantages of playing games which are mostly designed and developed in America or Japan is that we have to put up with their ideas about what makes a groovy sports sim. Hence basketball.

Now me, I've never been a massive fan of the game. I'm too short for a start, and Harlem Globetrotters exhibition performances (and the recent Olympic 'Dream Team' thing) somehow combine to stop me *ever* taking it seriously. One team just runs to one end and scores, then the other team gets the ball, runs to the other end and scores – that's about it, isn't it?

Well, yes and no. Luckily for you, our very own Jez Bridgeman is both a) tall enough to play (6'2"), and b) a big fan of the game, and was willing (dead keen, actually) to show me the ropes. And, once you give it a bit of time, basketball is actually very absorbing.

The controls are initially confusing, but work out fine once you're used to them. You get to pass, shoot, cycle between available players (in defense) and make attempts to take the ball off the other side. Graphics are fine (decent animation on the players, an attractive wooden-looking court thing), speed is excellent, and what's going on is usually very clear. You get all the real NBA players and lots of realistic statistics too.

You also get a good number of options – you can play oodles of league teams, or a special squad of all-time great players (there are East and West coast versions of this, so you can get a reasonably fair two-player game going).

Super NBA Basketball as a basketball game is difficult to fault. Yes, it's much better with two players (though a difficulty option allows you to tailor the computer teams to fit your standard). Yes, there could be more control of the actual shooting procedure (whether the ball goes in depends upon which team member you've chosen to take the shot, and where you've placed him, rather than any actual aiming on your part). But that's it. There are a handful of basketball games on their way at the moment, but they'll really have to go some to beat this.

● Matt Bielby

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
84%	75%	88%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	86%
85%		

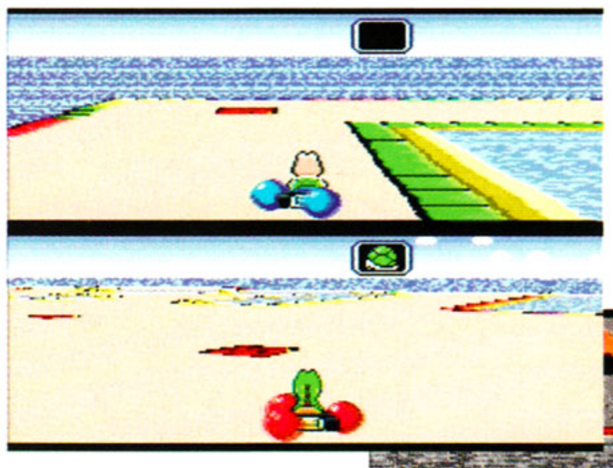
VERDICT: The flat side-on viewpoint works very well in this slickly animated, very accurate and real-life-statistic-packed basketball game. A must-buy for fans of the sport, but well worth considering by the rest of us too.

SUPER MARIO KART

UK Release

Game: Super Mario Kart
Publisher: Nintendo
Price: Approx. £40
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

Look who got an embarrassing woolly hat from his granny for Christmas! (*We've used that caption before – Ed.*)



Above: It's the balloon game! This is our favourite course – a great combination of winding backstreets and scary open spaces.

Right: Bowser Castle.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

When one's asked what the best game ever is, protocol dictates that the answer should be either *Super Mario World* or *Street Fighter II*. And, indeed, both these games scored 94%, the highest mark *Super Play*'s ever given. But the thing is, fine though these games are, we don't actually play them much in the *Super Play* office. So what *do* we play?

Mario Kart has been selling so well on import that its release date has been brought forward to December. At its heart is the ultimate driving game, combining stunning 3D graphics, cunningly designed and highly varied courses, a perfect 'driving feel', masses of depth, plenty of long-term challenge, lots of funny bits and, of course, Mario and chums.

But the feather in *Mario Kart*'s cap, the icing on its cake, the bull in its china shop (er...) is the balloon game. This is simply the best two-player game ever. Each game only lasts a minute or two, but it's incredibly competitive, and you'll find it impossible to resist having another go. And another. Combine this with the grand prix game and you've got the most essential purchase since, well, *Super Mario World* and *Street Fighter II*.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
93%	85%	92%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	94%
94%		

VERDICT: One of the top three games on the Super Nintendo. Everything about it is absolutely spot on.

AXELAY

UK Release

Game: Axelay
Publisher: Konami
Price: Approx. £45
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

If it wasn't so easy, we could have called this level 'rock hard'. Oh well.

Left: A giant worm!
Above: A giant robot!
Right: A giant spaceship!
(*Axelay* doesn't skip on the sizes of its baddies. Just wait till you see the amazing Giant Fire Monster.)

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Axelay is an absolutely gorgeous-looking game. In fact, it's probably safe to say that it's got the best graphics ever seen in a video game. It makes spectacular use of 3D scrolling, the colours are beautiful and it features some absolutely incredible end-of-level guardians.

Sadly, though, and to be really quite brutally honest, the graphics mask a very ordinary game. It all works okay, and it's fun enough for a while, but the six levels are short and easy, and nothing revolutionary happens in the process. It's just shoot, shoot, shoot, all the way to the end.

If it played as well as it looked, *Axelay* would probably be looking at a score somewhere in the mid 120s. If it looked awful, but was just the same gameplay-wise, it would be down in the low 70s. So arriving at a final score is tricky. In issue 2 I reckoned 85% seemed fair, and I still do.

If you've got a bit of spare cash, *Axelay* is worth buying simply because it looks so beautiful. If you haven't, look for something a bit more solidly playable.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
94%	90%	74%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	85%
70%		

VERDICT: Phenomenal graphics, but nothing amazing gameplay-wise. A bit of a 'look but don't touch (unless you've got money to burn)' sort of game.

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SKüLJAGGER

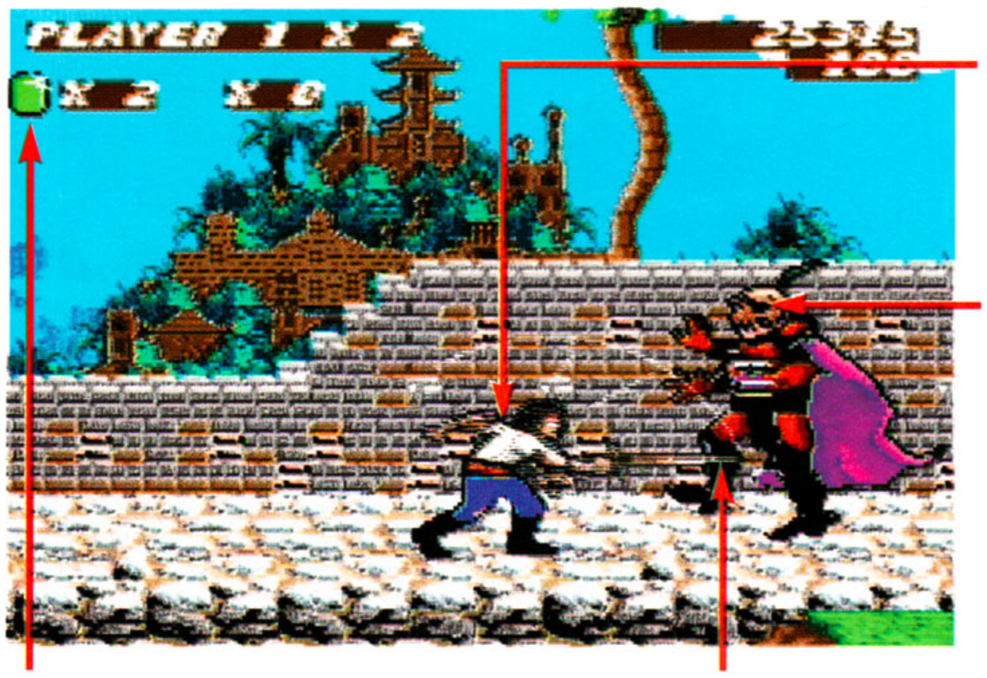
REVOLT OF THE WESTICANS

The Super NES has a mountain of top-notch platform games. Every so often, though, a new one comes along and proves an exception...

UK Release

Game: Sküljagger: Revolt of the Westicans
Publisher: American Softworks Corp
Developer: Realtime Associates
Price: Approx. £45
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

The story of *Sküljagger* is simple. Sküljagger's this evil, one-eyed pirate, an agent of the Kiltish empire who's attacked and invaded the peaceful (and jemerald-rich) island of Westican. Now rebellion is brewing, led by our boy, Storm Jaxon, who's stolen Sküljagger's magic sword. All hell's about to break loose...



Here's Storm Jaxon. He can jump, climb ladders, slash with that stolen sword, and do some pretty neat tricks with bubble gum...

Eek! It's Sküljagger himself! (He appears at the end of the third level, which is where we are now.) Drive him away with the special power ups you can collect from just off the top of the screen. (Not seen here.)

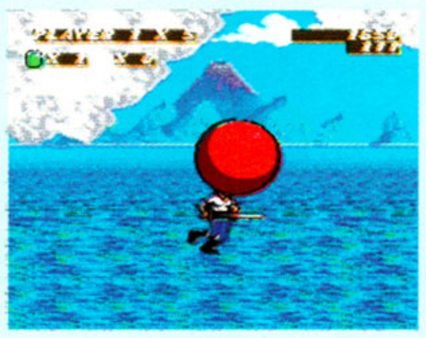
No handy floating jemeralds in this shot, but look – we've got two already.

This is the sword Storm has nicked, and which the conflict is all about. (Just thought you'd like to know.)

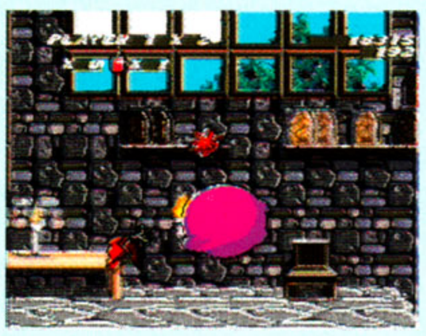
BUBBLE GUM CRISIS!

***Sküljagger* features possibly the weirdest weapon ever – fruit flavoured bubble gum! You see, one of the hobbies of our hero, Storm Jaxon, is making his own sweets. (Yes, really.)**

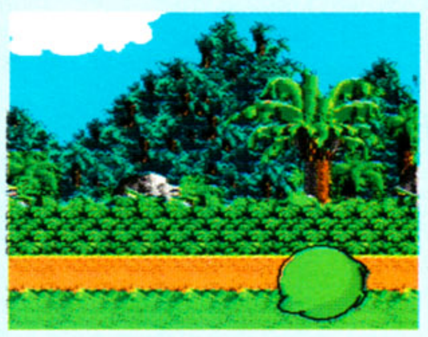
Weapon 1: Exploding oranges. Spit bubble gum grenades!



Weapon 2: Flying cherries. Kinda like a helium balloon!

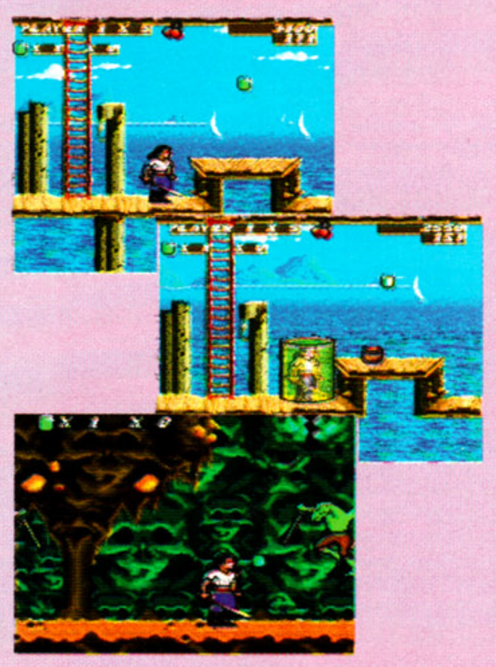


Weapon 3: Grape shield. Bounce around inside it!



Weapon 4: Lime bubble. A mad smart bomb-like thing!

SECRET LEVELS



Secret levels seem to be littered through the game. Here's one: Leap across the gap between the first two docks. Head right till you find the third small barrel. Don't leap onto the platform the barrel's on, but push Y – you'll warp to this underground level, packed with goodies to collect.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Like we said at the top of the page, if there's one thing the Super Nintendo can really boast, it's high quality platform games. There are so many good ones, it's difficult to single any out – but what the hell, eh? *Super Mario World*, *Mickey's Magical Quest*, *Castlevania IV*, *Prince Of Persia* and *Dinosaurs* are all personal favourites – each one funnier, prettier and more inventive than the last.

And then we get rubbish like this. This game has one good joke (the bizarre bubble gum section – see separate box), but little else to recommend it. Remembering the fun (hem, hem) I had with the absolutely lousy *Skull & Crossbones* coin-op last year, and then looking at this thing, I can't help feeling there must be some sort of jinx on pirate games – none of them are any good.

To be fair, though, the game starts off promisingly enough. It comes equipped with a vast (80 page) manual, telling the story of the game, and supposedly packed with hints and tips to help you through it. A nice touch, but – as far as I could tell – completely unnecessary. *Sküljagger* is simplicity itself to work out, you see – a run along, jump platforms, climb ropes, and kill everything in sight romp, with little resembling depth to it at all. The only slight complication comes from collecting jemeralds – red, green, blue and giant blue precious stones, which give you extra lives, extra time, or allow you to fire long-distance power-balls from your sword.

It's with time that this game starts to pall. While a *Mickey Mouse* or a *Dinosaurs* surprises and delights with each new level, *Sküljagger* just repeats more of the same fairly dull leaping around stuff. It's not particularly hard either – you'll finish it in no time. And the graphics are fairly flat looking too. Don't get me wrong – *Sküljagger* can be fun, in a really mindless, undemanding sort of a way. It's just that when you've just spent £45 on it you'll feel well and truly had.

● Matt Bielby

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
56%	55%	61%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
60%		58%

VERDICT: A flat-looking, easy, repetitive, platform game that provides some short-term laughs, but little more. Bubble gum bits are weird more than anything.

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ACTRAISER

SUPER PLAYER'S GUIDE

NINTENDO (UK/US/JAPAN)

By Jason Brookes

Delayed on official release – it was originally scheduled for November 1992, but has only just reached the shops – *Actraiser* is one of the true Super Nintendo classics. After all, what else offers quite this combination of fantastic platform hack-'em-up action and involving strategy? Although the US and UK versions are both noticeably easier than the Japanese one (and that's not just because there isn't a text barrier either), this guide should still prove to be invaluable – there's a lot of game here waiting to be discovered, and you might miss whole chunks of it if you're not pointed in just the right direction...

Actraiser is divided into six lands, with each land divided into three sections – an arcade slash-'em-up (1) to open the section, another to close it, and a completely different *Populous*-style simulation in between. (2) In the *Populous*-like bits you, playing a God-like character, have to provide suitable habitats for your people by killing the monsters that prey on them, and directing their expansion so they'll build over the monster's lairs and kill them all off. Got that?

1

2

The land of Fillmore

ACT 1 BOSS

(3) The first boss in *Actraiser* is a fierce-looking centaur, but he's actually a bit of a doddle to polish off. Just wait on the far left-hand side of the screen and, when he stops firing his lightning bolts, move in and slash him quickly, before he charges you with his spear. Retreat into the corner and repeat this until he expires.

3

SIMULATION

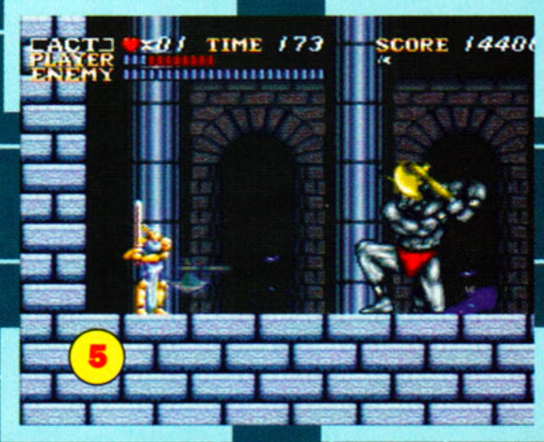
(4) Your basic task in these sections is to seal all of the Monsters' Lairs by building in their direction, then over them. The first three of these lairs should be easy enough to destroy, but the fourth one requires use of the bridge-building technique so you can cross the river. You earn this skill by gaining experience, increasing your population and getting your people to pray. The bridge icon should then be accepted.

4

In Fillmore it's also possible to collect two sources of magic, the magical fire, a bomb, and an angel power unit. Once the fourth lair has been sealed, the cave (which is hidden by the rocks at the bottom right corner of the map) can be entered to start the second act, though you'll have to get to it via the sky palace.

ACT 2 BOSS

(5) It's possible to take different routes to reach the end boss, but the top path seems to be the easier choice. Once you've arrived in the boss' chamber, try and get as many hits in as possible before he starts to jump. This Minotaur is really a fairly simple-to-beat opponent. The secret is to keep moving until he lands a safe distance from you. He will then throw an axe – jump over this, land next to him and give him a good thrashing. It's far easier to do this in the US and UK versions than the Japanese one. The same is true of all the bosses, who seem to have gone soft – possibly as a side-effect of the game being translated into English.



5

The land of Bloodpool

ACT 1 BOSS

6 Wait on the top ledge on the right for the griffin to fire a fireball at you. Jump over it, then slash him as fast as you can as he lands next to you.

SIMULATION

7 If you've got the bridge-building technique, use it to go for the closest lair in the south-east. If you haven't, go back to 'observe the people' of Fillmore, and then accept their offering and you will be given the skill. Dry up the swamps with sunshine to provide land suitable to build on. After your people have discovered wheat, clear the area east of the temple, connecting Bloodpool to Fillmore. Now Fillmore will have wheat too.

At this point your people will tell you that one of their own has disappeared. To find this missing person, offer bread to the cave entrance next to the Bloodpool and he will return safely home. The magic skull you'll receive as a result can then be used to seal the hidden lair which is in the corner next to the Bloodpool. Hopefully, the lake should then turn blue. The next act – the one located in the castle – can now be tackled.

ACT 2 BOSS

8 On the way to this demon-type boss thing there are a few goodies to be collected, including an extra life and a full health apple. Once in the chamber, the boss may cause you some problems if you're in the wrong part of the screen – it would be wise to avoid just barging in there, swords a-blazing.

The demon appears on one of the six platforms and shoots a three-way shot that should be quite easy to avoid. An electrical storm will then set in, though you'll get enough time for a good few slashes beforehand. It's actually possible to avoid all this bad guy's attacks by perfect positioning. When he's down to a quarter of his energy, he turns into a wolf – if you've got enough energy left at this point, just hack him to bits. To finish the job off more quickly, use some magic on him when he's out of range.

The land of Kasandora

ACT 1 BOSS

9 After collecting all the useful items along the way, your encounter with this ant-lion boss is likely to seem quite difficult at first. Stay in close when he appears, then hack away at him as fast as possible. When his jaws close in on you, jump over them and keep hacking, while avoiding the falling rocks. Pretty easy, really.

SIMULATION

10 The path to save the man lost in the desert is created by washing away the sand. When he's rescued (dead, invariably), some 'harmonious music' is written in his memory which can be given to the people of Bloodpool to cheer them up. Reveal the pyramid in the north, by washing away the sand, to gain access to the second act.

ACT 2 BOSS

11 The Egyptian Pharaoh Boss tries to stamp on your head, but since he's one of the easiest bosses of all to kill, you'll be okay just dodging him and slashing at him as fast as you can. When he fires his bolts, jump over them and then hit the sphinx heads that form on the wall. The plague that sweeps Kasandora is cured by travelling to another land – see the main map for the land that matches the one marked in chalk in the north west of Kasandora.

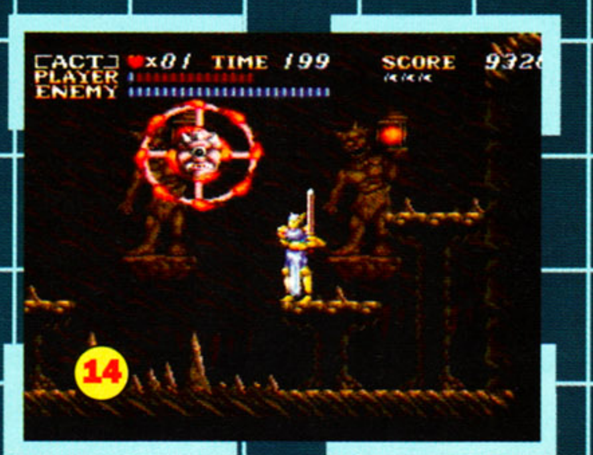
The land of Aitos

ACT 1 BOSS

12 This serpent is a doddle to get rid of once you've got the projectile weapon. Stay on the bottom ledge and alternate between facing left and right to hit him. You may lose some energy, but only when he fires his force fields in your direction.

SIMULATION

13 Skull head things chase you around the screen on this level – you'll need to take their lairs out as fast as you can to keep the peace in Aitos. Clear the rocks around the temple to reveal some further hidden monsters lairs. The sheep's fleece is an item you'll need later on. Once the monsters' lairs have been sealed, the volcano will erupt, sending fireballs flying everywhere. The second act takes place inside the volcano.



ACT 2 BOSS

14 This firewheel boss can be tackled as follows: When you arrive in his chamber, jump up onto the lowest platform and simply slash the boss as quickly as you can – you'll lose some energy doing this, but he's relatively easy to dispose of.

Next month: The lands of Marahna, Northwall and Death Heim (the game's conclusion) revealed! (Are we good to you or what?)

15

The Country Code: things to bear in mind, wherever you are

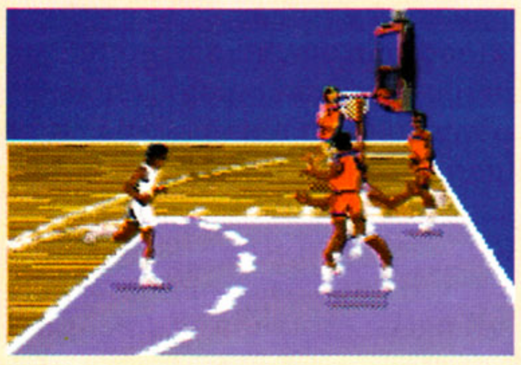
Here we have a good selection of handy general tips to bear in mind while playing *Actraiser*.

- Try to seal the closest monsters lairs first, to prevent losing too many people.
- Earthquake's rid the lands of lower-level, small population homes. By destroying these, better homes can then be built to accommodate bigger populations.
- Remember to use magic on the bosses if your health is low.
- Try and start every land by planting wheat, which you'll find growing around Bloodpool.
- To get the highest populations possible – and also receive all the hidden items – spread your people over every bit of land available.
- In the acts (the arcade sections), avoid hitting icons from below – they're easier to lose that way.
- Some items have different purposes, depending on where you use them. A good example is the compass, which gives you extra magical points in the first land, but later in the game also gives you the magical Aura – a rotating ball of light which fires at your enemies – to use as a weapon.
- The points obtained in the action sections determine how many people can populate an area in the strategy bit that follows.

SUPER BASKETBALL

UK Release

Game: Super Basketball
Publisher: Nintendo/HAL
Price: Approx £45
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit



The purpose of these pictures is really to show you how wonderfully the court spins round. Other than that they're pretty dull. Sorry.

The team 'take five' for a quick aerobics session. Just look at that court spin.

Yo! Slamdunk! (Er, that is what they say, isn't it?) (*The Lord preserve us – Ed.*)

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Blimey, this really is turning into a 'sporting' issue, isn't it? (*Er, that was the idea – Ed.*) *Super Basketball*'s court looks outrageously good as it spins and scrolls around in 3D – this is what Mode 7's all about, and is excellent material for wooing SNES-sceptics. The players are really well animated, too, and you hardly notice that they not exactly 'at one' with the court. And, as if all that wasn't enough, the sound is great as well, with crowd chants and ridiculous organ tunes.

It plays a pretty mean game of basketball, too. Except that it gets a little confusing at times, with the court spinning faster than an ineffectual brain like mine can handle. And it's a bit awkward when the player you're meant to be controlling isn't actually anywhere on the screen.

In fact, all things considered, if it's the ultimate game of basketball you're after you might be better off going for the import game *Super NBA Basketball*, which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. But this is undoubtedly the more technically impressive of the two games.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
89%	82%	79%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	84%
84%		

VERDICT: Technically accomplished and really playable with it. What more could you possibly want from a basketball game?

SUPER OFF ROAD

Options you can buy in the shop include new tyres, nitro injection, higher max speed and so on.

Boo! Looks like the silver driver has won again. (He's almost unbeatable when you first start the game.)

UK Release

Game: Super Off Road
Publisher: Trade West
Price: Approx £45
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit

Oh no! Player two, the blue truck, is totally confused and going the wrong way!

Check out these obstacles – water troughs, bumps, tight corners, potholes and all sorts!

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

You'll remember this from the arcades, the Amiga, the Spectrum and just about everything else probably – a non-scrolling *Super Sprint* type racing game, the novelty coming from the number of animation frames (a lot) on each of these tiny trucks, and the hilarious way every bounce and bump is exaggerated. As such it's a limited game (once you've got below 30 second lap times on every course you'll get bored quickly), but a lot of fun while it lasts, particularly with two players, when you'll spend half your time bumping into each other, rushing off the wrong way around the track.

Super Off Road was developed for Trade West by UK team Software Creations (they did *Spiderman & The X-Men*, reviewed last month), and as such plays to their strengths (chiefly, in this case, excellent music). It's also, you may or may not be disturbed to note, sponsored by Toyota, so you get to see their pick-up trucks and their logo appearing everywhere.

It all adds up to a briefly very enjoyable, fun racer, though I can't help feeling it's too shallow to command inflated SNES prices.

● Matt Bielby

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
75%	85%	71%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	63%
40%		

VERDICT: A fast and funny off-road racing game, great with two players, but too small and short to be worth this sort of money.

POWER ATHLETE

Japanese Release

Game: Power Athlete
Publisher: Kaneko
Price: Approx £40-45
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

A woman with pink trousers moves in for the kill on a man in purple trousers. (*Is that the best you can do? – Ed.*)

The setting sun serves as a suitable backdrop for the demise of the Kabuki-style warrior Toyah. Our hero with purple trousers lets her know what he thinks of her music.

Warren (yes, really) – certainly one of the game's less attractive characters – models a rather lovely pair of green swimming trunks . Mmm.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Let's get it out in the open straight away. The characters on offer in this, the latest beat-'em-up I've been cajoled into reviewing, are among the most ridiculously named, looking and – I'm afraid – animated I've ever seen. And to think that we've been lead to believe that the Japanese are quite competent at designing realistic sprites. Tsk.

The game is, of course, yet another clone of *Street Fighter II* – though one that seems to have been designed by a madman. Realism is obviously not something creators Kaneko dwelled on for long – this is all over the place. The really strange thing is that while some of it can be put down to simple technical ineptitude – the jerkiness of the characters is laughable – much of the game seems to have been deliberately designed to be bad. Some of the special moves available are really ridiculous.

However, the game, while terrible for one player, livens up in the head-to-head fights, which makes it so hilarious. If ever a beat-'em-up begged to be described as 'crap – but in a groovy kind of way', this is it.

● Rich Pelley

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
62%	77%	45%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	49%
56%		

VERDICT: A poor *SFII* rip-off – and a total waste of money – but if you did ever get to play it, I'd venture you'd grow oddly fond of it.

BRASS BOSS

Japanese Release

Game: Brass Boss
Publisher: Lasersoft/Telenet
Price: Approx £45–50
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

Grimrock tries an aerial attack on P Lump Fatty Bomber. No, *Brass Boss* isn't short of silly names – one of the game's stronger points.

Amon the Heavy Metal King takes on Sledge The Brassy Hero. Silly names, but groovy skyscrapers – very *avant garde*.

Like every other beat-'em-up since *Street Fighter II*, every character has their own special move. (Yawn.)

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Nope, it's no good, I just can't think of anything remotely amusing to say about *Brass Boss*. As you might have guessed, *Brass Boss* is yet another one-on-one *Street Fighter II* clone, and proves as unremarkable as games like *Power Athlete* (above) and *North Star Ken 6*. With so many derivatives flooding the market, it's not surprising we're getting a bit 'brassed off' with them all.

Players choose from a variety of oddly named misfits (things like 'Daisy Dancing Plant' and 'Sledge The Brassy Hero') and try to beat each other up using a variety of techniques and, of course, the now customary special moves. As in *Power Athlete*, players strengths can be powered up by the allocation of energy blocks, earned from winning bouts.

Graphically, this is a mixed bag. Some levels are on the primitive side, but some look rather nice. Some of the sprites are pretty good too, but ultimately the desperately unoriginal gameplay shows through. It's just another production line job. Not recommended.

● Jason Brookes

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
65%	78%	56%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	56%
52%		

VERDICT: A bizarre looking beat-'em-up that's playable in its own little way, but far too derivative to make any sort of a splash.

Thanks to Shekhana Consoles, (081) 340 8565, for the loan of this cart.

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- NES

The independent Nintendo mag from Future Publishing

January 1993 Issue 13 £1.95

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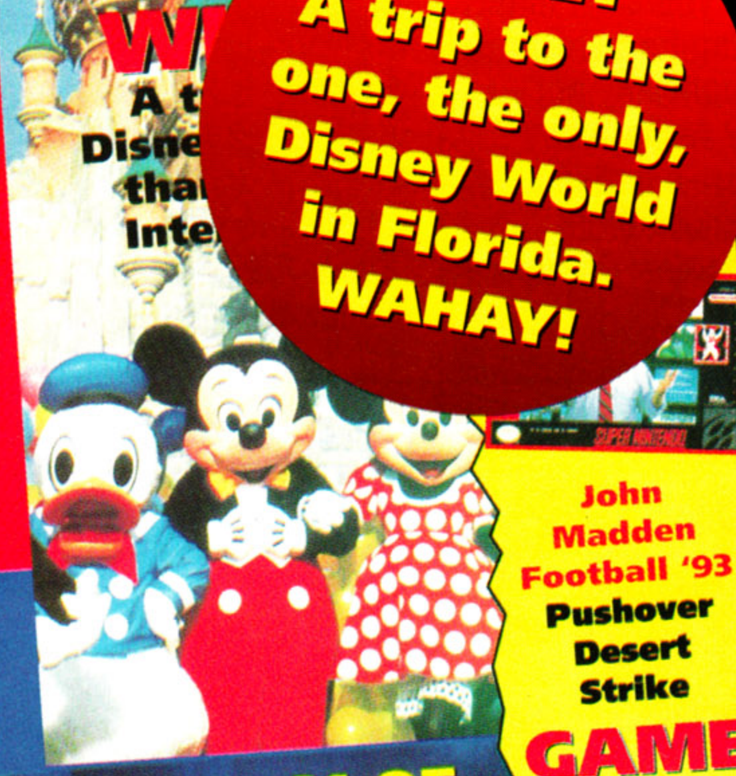

John Madden Football '93
Pushover
Desert Strike

GAME BOY!

Loony Toons
Terminator 2
Xenon 2
Spiderman 2
Krusty's Fun House

NES!

McDonald Land
Dyna Blaster
Parasol Stars
WWF 3

STARRING MICKEY MOUSE!

Capcom work some Disney magic on the Super NES. Live the quest on page 30!

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50 Reviews! More than any other mag!

Possibly the best magazine beginning with 'T'

MODE 7

CALLING ALL CHEATS, CRACKERS, AND GAME FREAKS!

Welcome to Mode 7, the part of *Super Play* that does for tips what, er... well, it's got some really good tips in, anyway. If you can't find what you're looking for here in the main bit, though, why not write to Ask Ade? As he keeps reminding us, there's nothing our Ade doesn't know about Super Nintendo games. (Well, not much, anyway.)

Remember: for Mode 7 to work, we need YOU to send us loads of hints, tips and cheats. What's in it for you? A handy *Super Play* pen if you get anything printed, or maybe even an exclusive and very stylish *Super Play* T-shirt. (If we *really* like your cheat, that is). The address to write to is: Mode 7, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

Super Mario Kart

(Nintendo)

We couldn't let an issue go by without a *Mario Kart* tip. After a one-player time trial, where you haven't crashed into any pipes, if you select an action replay (the option at the bottom of the list on the Jap version) you can use the L and R buttons to rotate the track during the replay.

Woah! Help! Everything's spinning round, and round...

Phalanx

(Kemco)

This game's almost worth buying just for the picture on the box. (You'd have to see it.) And here's a cheat for it.

To access a 'special environments' mode, press START on the title screen, go the System Configuration option and press START while holding R on Controller 1. Then press the L and R buttons together on controller 2 and there it is! You can now select extra lives and credits. What's more, if you press A, B, X and Y down together on Controller 2, you'll then be given a stage select option. And (and!) if you highlight the 'stock' option and press and hold SELECT and START on Controller 2, you'll be able to choose up to 30 lives and 99 credits.

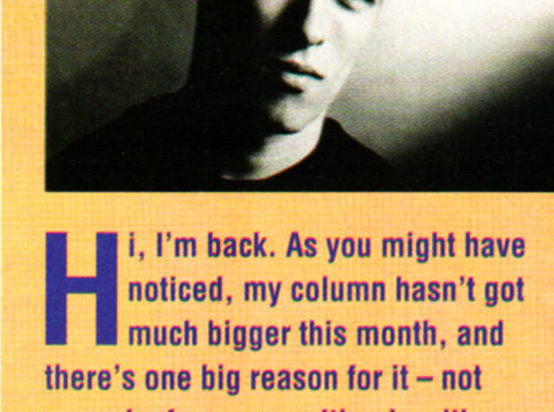
And here it is – you're actual System Configuration screen!

Just to prove it works, here's a picture from incredibly far into the game.

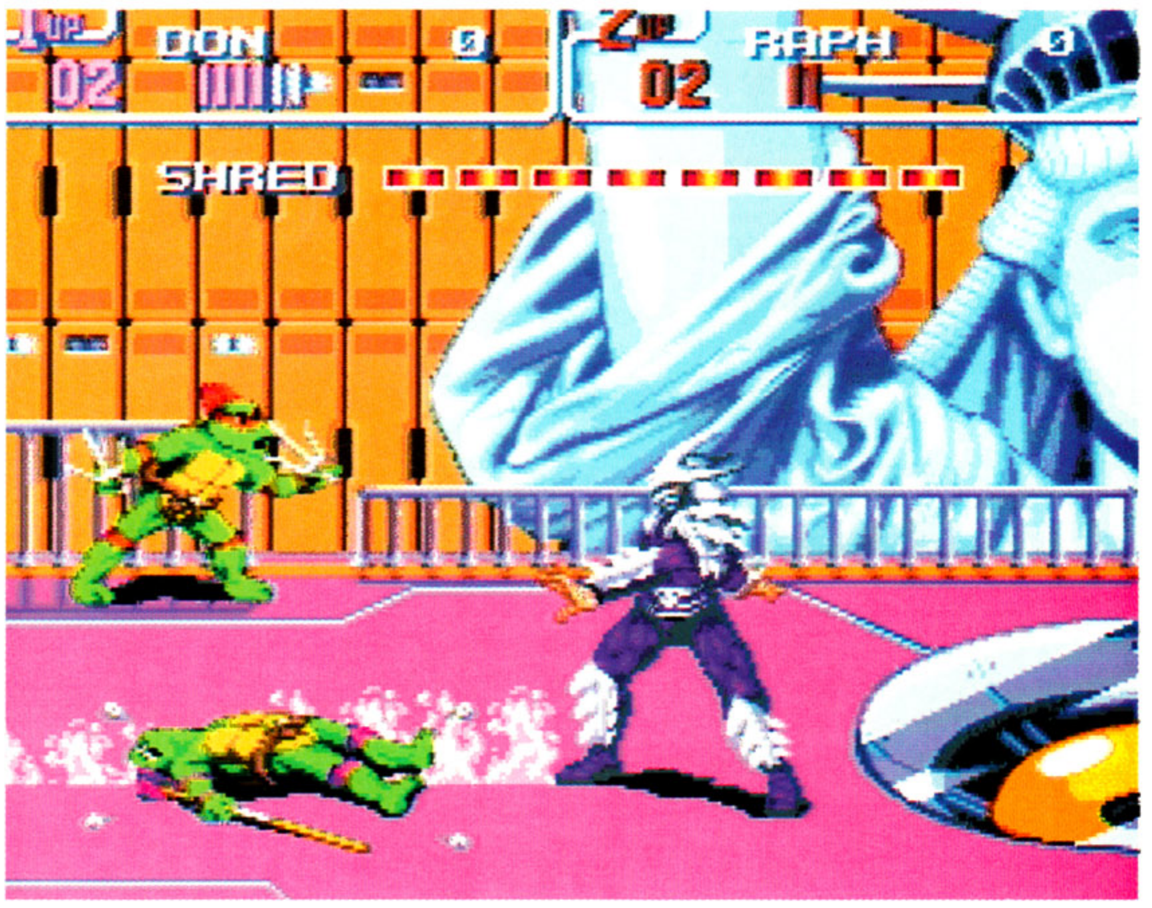
Spindizzy Worlds

(Activision)

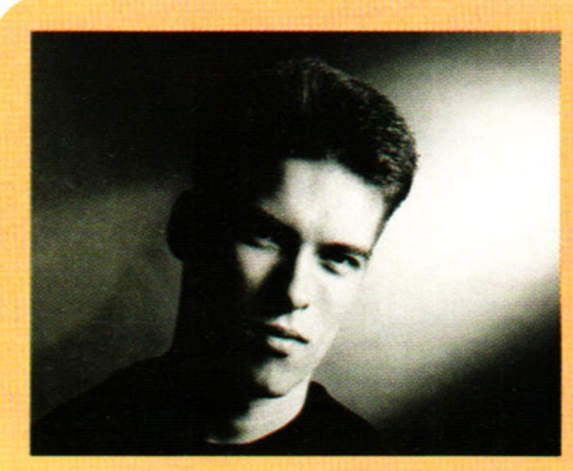
Entering MIMICHAN as a password will give you a test mode where you'll be able to choose the level.



Look, here it is! The test mode in all its glory (and that's an awful lot of glory).



They're heroes in a half-shell... And there's lots more of them now.



ASK ADE

INVALUABLE MONTHLY GAMING ADVICE

Hi, I'm back. As you might have noticed, my column hasn't got much bigger this month, and there's one big reason for it – not enough of you are writing in with your game problems. A bit of a shock to me, that, I can tell you – I can't believe you're all so brilliant at Super NES games you don't need my help! I could also do with a bit more 'ade' (ho ho) from the top games players amongst you – there are still a few gameplaying problems I couldn't help some readers with outstanding, and more this issue, so please write in if you can help.

Right, that's it with the intro. On with the show...

Dear Ade,
I am having some trouble getting anywhere with *Super R-Type*. Could you please give me some tips or cheats?
Russel Bishop, Troon, Scotland.

● Sure. Try this: on the title screen, press SELECT, then the R button nine times, UP nine times, SELECT and START. When the game starts, pause and press SELECT, A and R together. This allows you to play on any level you like.

Dear Ade,
I am stuck on *Super Probotector*. Are there any cheats?
Darren Hirsh, Edgware.

● There are indeed. Here's a sneaky one, for instance. First, play in a two-player game. Allow yourself to die and – what's this? – you should find you'll be able to steal the lives of the other player by pressing the A button.

Prince of Persia
(NCS Masiya/Konami)

He's a prince. He lives in Persia. He's the Prince of Persia! As many of you will have realised *Prince Of Persia* is an incredibly challenging game. But not any more! Not if you use this cheat, anyway.

Try entering SPECIAL as a password, and then Cancelling when the game won't accept it. After starting the game, pause it and press B, Y, UP,

Again you doubt us. Again we're only too happy to prove ourselves right.

DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, L and R and you'll hear a sound. Then hold START and press SELECT, and you'll be given a level select, a sound select and a boost meter option. Pretty neat, eh?

Super Pang
(Capcom)

We quite liked *Super Pang*, but we were a bit cross that they forgot to put a two-player option in.

For a level select option, go to the Select Game screen and press L, R, R, L , UP and DOWN.

An ordinary *Super Pang* option screen? Far from it...

Krusty's Super Fun House
(Acclaim)

'Thanks for printing the codes for the American version of *Krusty's* in issue 1,' lots of people have been saying, 'but how about the British version, eh?'

Never let it be said that we don't 'understand our readers' needs and meet them' (or whatever).

Level 2: SKINNER
Level 3: SCRATCHY
Level 4: BARTDUDE
Level 5: BOUVIER

Thanks to Andrew Williams of London for these codes. A fabulous *Super Play* pen is winging its way to you, even as we speak.

Turtles IV
(Konami)

Here are some *Turtles* tips. We've tested them on the Japanese version of the game, but they may well work on the UK version too.

● For 10 lives per turtle, use Controller 2 on the title screen and press UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, B, A. (This is a standard Konami cheat which, as hardened gamefreaks will know, works on most of their games.) Then go to the option screen where you'll be able to change Rest to 10.

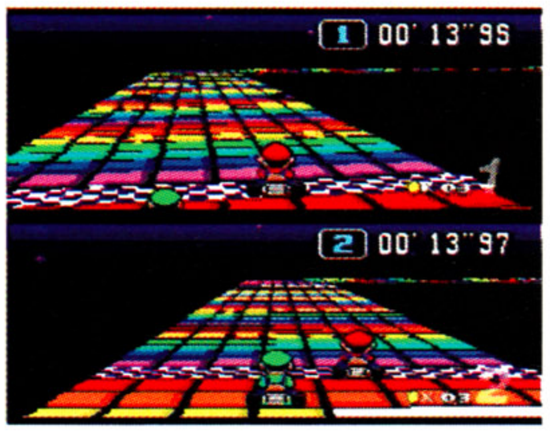
● For a boss select, use Controller 2 on the title screen and press UP, UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, DOWN, B, A, B. Start the game from the select screen.

● To see what happens when you complete the game, again use Controller 2 on the title screen and press X, Y, B, A, UP, LEFT, DOWN, RIGHT, R, L and start the game with Controller 1.

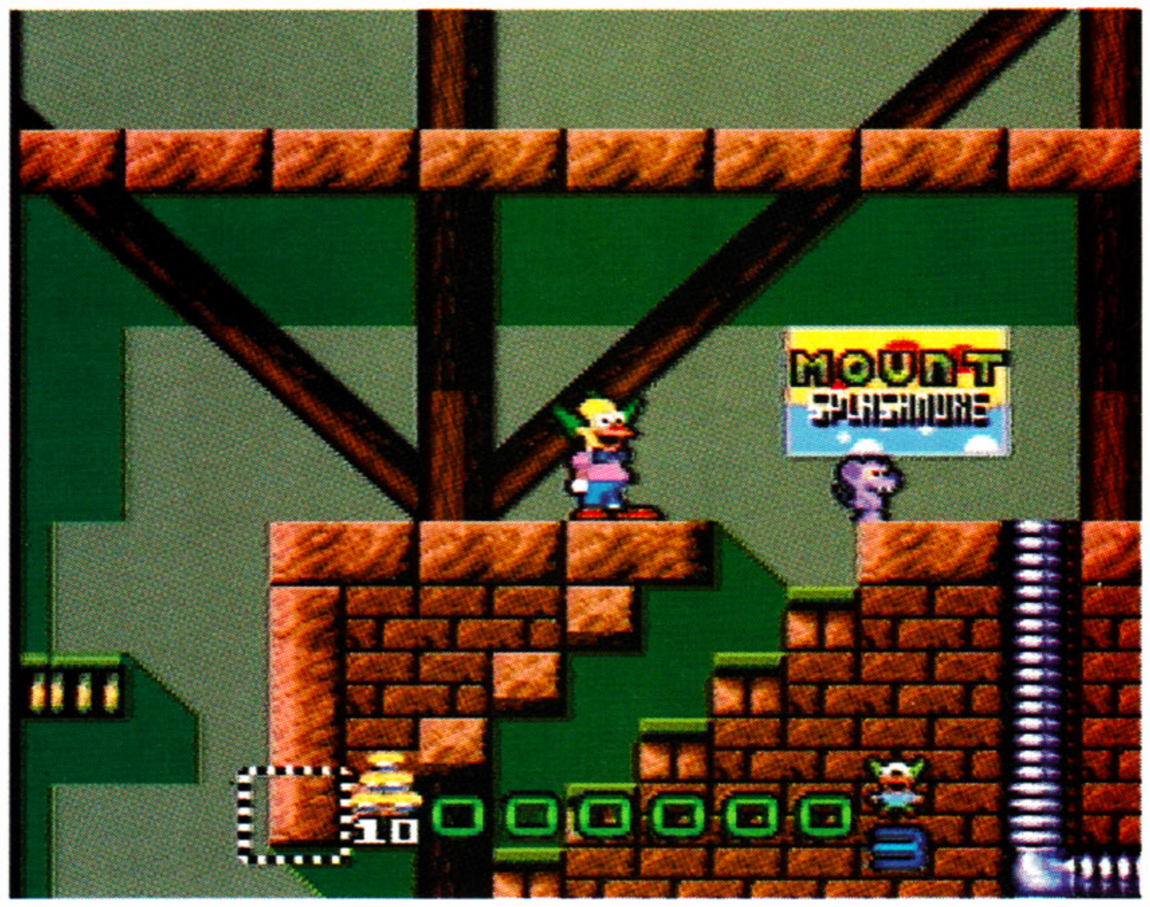
● To select the starting level, use Controller 2 on the title screen and press LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, L, R and start the game with Controller 1.

Super Mario Kart
(Nintendo)

Again! But wait – this one's better than *all* the rest! To access the Special Cup courses without having to win all the other cups first, select a one- or two-player time trial and move the cursor to the Mushroom Cup item at the top left. Then press L, R, L, R, L, L, R, R and A. You'll now be able to choose from five new courses! Hurrah! (We've tested this on the Jap version, but not the US one.)



It's brightly coloured – and now you can drive round it too!



Q. What's yellow and wears a purple T-shirt and red boots? A. Krusty.

Don't fancy that? Well, I don't know. You could try making sure you're playing on the 'Easy' difficulty setting. It's still not easy as such, but with two players you should be able to make some progress.

Dear Ade,
Please could you tell me how to do Zangief's Spinning Piledriver and Ryu's Dragon Punch, in *Street Fighter II*?
Craig Sheldon, Bristol.

● These secret moves aren't easy on the Super Nintendo's joypad, but they are possible. Here's how you manage them. To do the Piledriver, let your thumb do a 360° turn on the joypad from the top clockwise around the pad when you're standing close to an opponent, then press any punch button. (We found this a lot easier using the new touch sensitive Turbo Touch pad from Hornby, by the way. For more details check out Super Express last month, or phone Hornby on (0843) 225555.)

Ryu's Dragon Punch is much simpler. Just pull down on the pad, then towards your opponent, then diagonally down towards your opponent and any punch button – it's tricky at first! Hope this has answered your query.

Dear Ade,
Could you please tell me where the Silver arrows are in *Zelda III*?
Yo Wu, London.

● After you've killed the sixth guardian, go to your house in the Dark World and buy some Super Bombs. Now go to the Pyramid and blow a hole in the wall. Then go inside and drop your bow – you will now (ta da!) have those long-awaited silver arrows.

Dear Ade,
I own *Super Smash TV*, and was wondering if there is any way of getting into the pleasure domes without doing all the levels?
Edward Renshaw, Lincoln.

● Sorry matey, I don't believe there is any such short cut. You'll just have to collect the 10 keys like everyone else. (But please, if anyone out there knows any different, why not write in and put Edward and myself out of our misery.)

Dear Ade,
I have a small query. In issue one on page 55, you stated that if you complete *Street Fighter II* without losing a round on difficulty level seven, you'll get to hear Chun Li speak. I've done this, and all she says is 'Ya Ta'. Is this a cruel joke?
John Legge, Bucks.

Hey, we never claimed she said anything interesting! If you really want to complain, why not give Capcom a call and speak to them about it? By the way (and if you're interested) 'Ya ta' should actually be written 'Ya tta' (we think) and means 'I've done it!' or 'Eureka!' So now you know.

And that's yer lot this month. If you've got any gameplaying questions, or could help out with Edward's *Smash TV* problem, write to me at: Ask Ade, *Super Play*, FUTURE PUBLISHING, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

The circuit warp screen. You can tell because it's got 'Circuit Warp' written at the top.

Super Smash TV

(Acclaim)

Issue 1 explained how to get extra credits and lives for this. Here's more:

● For a level select, go to the player select/options screen and press RIGHT, RIGHT, UP, DOWN, R and L.

● If you complete the game, you'll get the chance to play through it again at turbo speed. Go to the options screen and press LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, UP, R and R.

For a sound test, go to the options screen and press L, R, L, L, R.

Thanks to Justin Bull of Little Berkhampsted, reaching screens like this will be a whole lot easier from now on.

Action Replay Codes

These are for people who kitted themselves out with an Action Replay cartridge. (Check out Superstore on page 80 for details of how to get one at an extra specially reduced price.)

Game	Function	Code
Castlevania IV	Infinite energy	7E13F410
	Infinite time	7E13F040
Hole-in-One Golf	Always get hole-in-one	7E10A102
Super Adventure Island	Infinite energy	7E030D02
	Infinite time	7E0D6C0C
Super Aleste	Infinite bombs	7E015203
Top Gear	Infinite nitros	7E1E6C03

Thanks very much to Barry Clough of Dunfermline for these very handy codes – he'll get for his trouble (of course) a fabulous *Super Play* pen.

Long time *Super Play* readers (well, those who've been with us since number 1) will remember we ran a Cheats Special to *Street Fighter II* in that very first issue. We thought we'd run every hot tip there was for the game there, but no – such is the fascination *SFII* holds with gameplayers all over the world that it seems they simply won't let it lie, with a whole new series of cheats having been uncovered in the few short months since that first magazine. Looks like we'd better keep you up-to-date on them, hadn't we?

For those who missed issue 1, one of the best tricks we revealed was one to get Ken and Ryu to fight against their computer controlled alter egos in exactly the same colour kits. What we didn't know at the time was that it doesn't end there – it is actually possible to get the same trick to work for all the other selectable characters. The process is very complicated though, so pay attention. Things could get pretty confusing, and we certainly suggest that before you start out you mark your joypads 1 and 2 with a pencil, some coloured stickers or something similar so you remember which is which (especially if their leads are all tangled up like on ours!) Done that? Then let's go...

Stage 1

Start a one-player game with joypad 1, selecting any character you like (as long as it's NOT the one you want the trick to work for), and let him/her lose both rounds against his/her computer opponent.

We chose Ryu here and, as you can see, let Dhalsim defeat him.

Stage 2

When asked to continue, press START on joypad 1 and you'll go back to the player selection screen. Now, with the same joypad, select the character you DO want the trick to work for. Now press START and enter the game again. Let your designated character lose two rounds against the computer opponent. (It's important to remember what character you've picked.)

Super Mario Kart

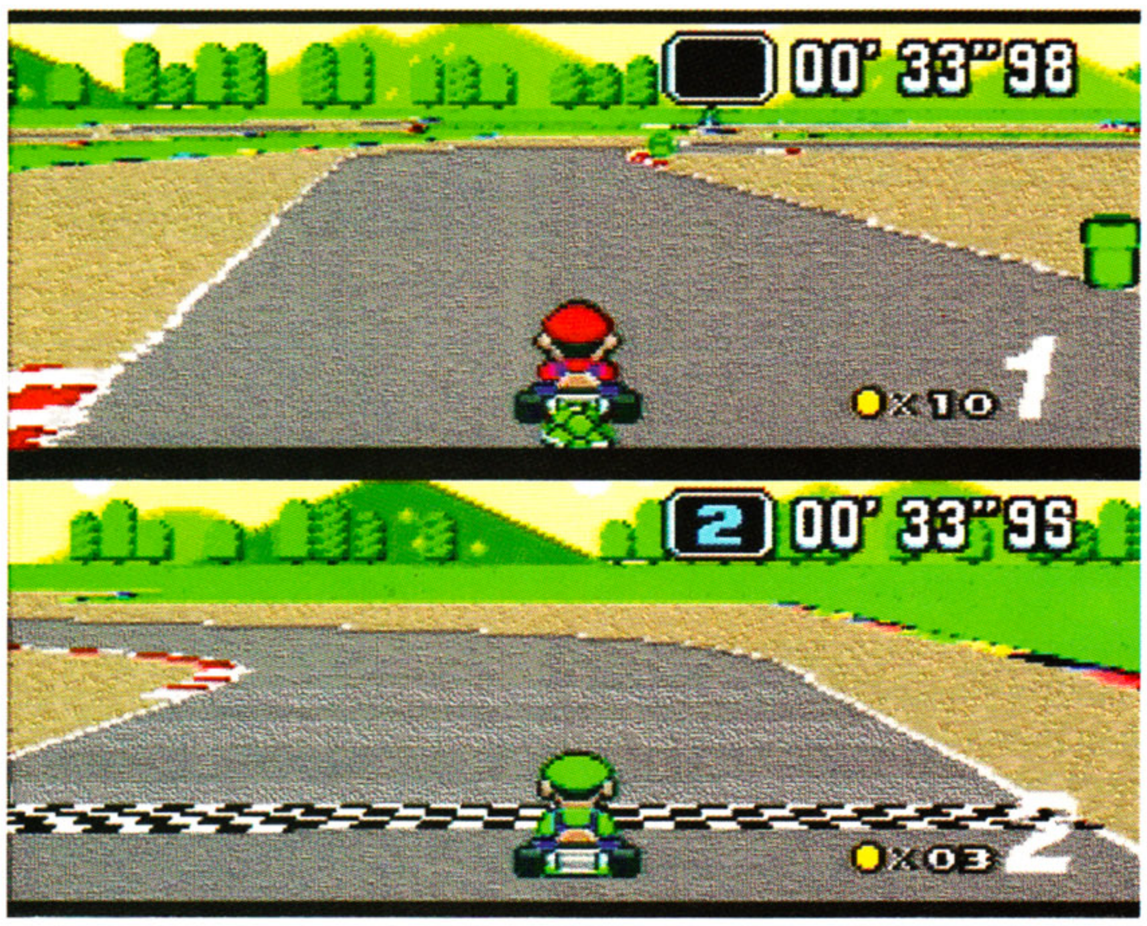
(Nintendo)

Sorry – couldn't resist it. Here's another one. You remember that 'fast start' tip we printed in issue 2? Well... it *does* work. But the thing is that there are other ways of achieving the same effect. For example, waiting till just before the second light comes on, and then pressing and holding B. It seems that the trick is to make sure the engine's revving at just the right speed when the green light comes on. Too slow and nothing'll happen, too fast and you'll wheel-spin, but just right and you'll shoot off unbelievably quickly. If there's a failsafe way of getting this to work every time, we'd love to hear it. (*Super Play* pens await...)

Ready for one more? Did you know (and we'll bet you didn't) that if you press 'DOWN' as you release a green shell, it'll drop onto the ground behind you, rather than shooting off at the front? Or if you press 'UP' when you release a banana skin, the opposite will happen and it'll fly out in front of you? You never know, it might be handy.

And finally, something we're not entirely sure about. What you want to do for this one is complete a one-player time trial, without crashing into any pipes, so that when you finish it you'll be given a list of five options. Move the cursor down to the second one (we're not sure what it says – we've got the Japanese version) and press L, R and A down together. A message will flash up at the bottom of the screen. (Again, er...) Now, we're not sure what the significance of this is. The best explanation we can offer is that it saves a copy of the little 'ghost' character so you can practice against it with other characters. There's probably more to it than that, though.

Is there no end to the hidden features in *Mario Kart*? If you manage to uncover any we haven't yet mentioned, please write in immediately and you might win a pen or even a T-shirt.



The 'fast start' worked this time... but will we pull it off again next time?

Street Fighter II

HOT CHEATS SPECIAL

We chose Guile as our designated character and let him lose.

Stage 3

Press continue on joypad 1 once more, and choose a different character again (you'll notice that the face of your last character is still in colour). Let this new character fly to a stage and then press START on joypad 2 to join in. When taken back to the selection screen, select another character with the second joypad, but avoid the one you want the trick to work for.

Stage 4 – joypad 1 selected Ken and 2 chose E Honda.

Stage 4

When both characters arrive at this stage, take joypad 1 and thrash player 2 for both rounds. When player 2 is asked to continue, wait until the stage is chosen by the computer and then join in by pressing START on joypad 2 and selecting the character that corresponds to that stage.

India was the computer's chosen stage, so joypad 2 picked Dhalsim.

Stage 5

Thrash player 2 with the first character again and follow the same proceedure as in Stage 4 after this. Keep advancing through the characters in this way until you reach the stage and character that the trick is set to work for.

China was the computer's next choice, so here Ken (1) wastes Chun Li (2).

Stage 6

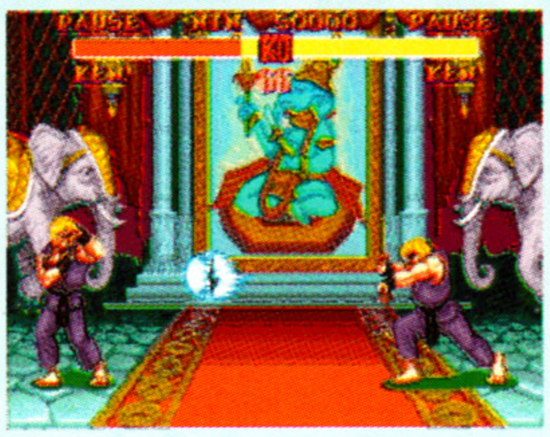
At this point press continue on joypad 2 as before, but don't let your designated character get beaten up. Simply let both characters stand still until the time runs out in all four rounds.

We've reached Guile's stage and both characters just sit it out this time.

Stage 7

After this player 1 will be asked to continue. Press start on joypad 1 and select the character that the trick is set to work for. You will now be fighting a one-player game with identical characters!

Yeah! Guile vs Guile in the same combat gear. Confusing, eh?



Ken vs Ken in Champion Edition colours.

Getting the Champion Edition colours!

If you want to change the colours of the characters to those of the Champion Edition, simply enter the standard character vs character cheat as the Capcom logo fades in. For those that don't know this cheat, it goes like this: On the US and UK versions, press DOWN, R button, UP, L button, Y and then B as the Capcom logo fades in (on the Jap version add X and A on the end).

Want the Champion Edition bosses?

Well tough, you can't. Or at least, we can't. However, at least one person has written in to us saying that he can get this cheat – and has sent in photographic evidence to prove it. Amit (no surname supplied) provided pictures of Sagat in a different stage of the game from his own. He claims 'My brother was mucking about on the selection screen pressing all the buttons on our Capcom joystick. I chose Ryu and my brother chose Blanka and Sagat's face appeared. He was able to control him and we ended up choosing all 4 bosses.'

Hands up all those who thinks he's telling porkies? Hands up all those who think he's got an Datel Action Replay cartridge (which will allow you to get the bosses up on screen, but won't allow you to control them – see Action Replay codes opposite)? To be honest we're not convinced, but could the Capcom joystick hold the secret? (Though if the joystick somehow contained codes to allow the boss characters to be controlled, don't you think Capcom would have advertised it?) If you know anything else about this thorny old subject, why not write in and let us know? The address?: Mode 7, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW.

Yet more *Street Fighter II* Action Replay codes!

Want to achieve the same effect as this cheat, but can't be bothered with all that fiddling about? Then you need a Datel Action Replay cart (we sell them on page 80). Input the following codes and start a one-player game with the character of your choice:

7EOED100 - Ryu vs Ryu
7EOED101 - E. Honda vs E. Honda
7EOED102 - Blanka vs Blanka
7EOED103 - Guile vs Guile
7EOED104 - Ken vs Ken
7EOED105 - Chun Li vs Chun Li
7EOED106 - Zangief vs Zangief
7EOED107 - Dhalsim vs Dhalsim

Want to fight against the bosses in different stages?
7EOED108 - M. Bison
7EOED109 - Sagat
7EOED10A - Balrog
7EOED10B - Vega

Want to control the bosses too? Erm, we seem to have misplaced those....

How about Ryu in Ken's clothes?
7E00C404 – This gives a Ryu vs Ryu game. Switch the Action Replay off and, when continuing, highlight Ken. Ryu now wears Ken's gear. Don't worry if the graphics mess up in the first round.

7EOCB200 - Black Belt edition (fireballs in mid air) - one-player.
7EOEB200 - Black Belt edition - two-player.
7EOC2BB0 - Invincibility
7EOC6001 - Speed Fighter mode (also printed last issue).
Thanks go to Eric Chan from Southend-on-Sea for these codes.

Amit sent us some fuzzy photos, but here's one we 'prepared' earlier.

GAMEFREAK

SNES TECH & GAMING ANSWERS

by Jason Brookes

'My mate says *Street Fighter II* is rubbish on the Super NES. Is he right?'; 'Where can I get a printer lead for my Acorn Archimedes?'; 'Why are all games so bloody expen...' (*Snip! - Ed.*) Yes, there are some questions even the Gamefreak won't answer. The people below, however, managed to come up with some rather more sensible problems...

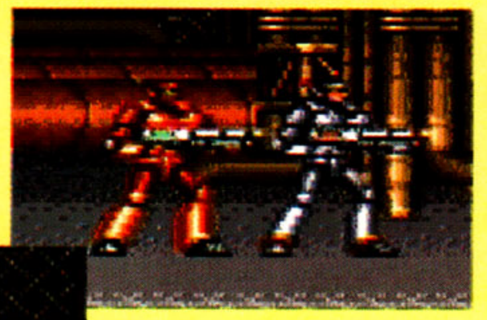
Dear Gamefreak,
I have some questions.
1) Will there ever be a *Zelda IV* for the Super Nintendo?
2) Are any of System 3's *Last Ninja* games coming out on the Super NES?
3) Will *Final Fight Guy* be released in the UK?
4) My friend tells me that *Castlevania IV* can get boring very quickly – is this true?
Ben Fletcher, Grantham, Lincs.

1) Yes, *Zelda IV* is definitely coming for SNES and – quite possibly – CD release, though other details are currently non-existent. Don't expect it in '93 though.
2) No news as yet. However, System 3's *Myth* and *Putty* – both of which you'll probably remember from the Amiga – are on the way. If they ever *do* develop a SNES *Ninja*, don't expect it until at least '94 – and don't expect it to have all that much in common with the earlier versions of it either!
3) I very much doubt it – the first game is the better of the two anyway. It's more challenging, and Cody is a better character.
4) Personally, I think *Castlevania IV* is a great game. The casual gamer might find it a bit dull – the early levels are by no means the best in the game – but give it some time and it really grows on you. To be honest, I suspect your friend could benefit from giving the game a bit more time if anything – write to me in a month if he's tried turning the lights down, the volume up, playing it for a couple of hours and still not got into it. I suspect you won't.

Dear Gamefreak,
We all agree the mag is great, and by far the best mag for the SNES. The following questions are ones we've collected from the whole year at school.
1) Will *Terminator 2* be like the arcade version, and as such will it use the Super Scope?
2) As most of us have adaptors, we would like to know which is best – *Contra III* (US) or *Super Probotector* (UK)?
3) Will *Street Fighter II: Champion Edition* be out on the Super CD ROM or on 16 Mbit cart for the SNES?
4) Will the Mega Drive version of *SFII* be better than the SNES version (honestly)?
5) Will games such as *Streets Of Rage* and *EA Ice Hockey* be out on the SNES?
6) Is *David Crane's Amazing Tennis* (US) any good, and when will it be out over here?
7) Will there be speed games like *Sonic* on the SNES?
8) Will there be another *Final Fight* game on CD or a 16 megabit cart, with three characters to choose between and a two-player mode?
9) Is *Super Probotector* the best shoot-'em-up on the SNES? If not, what is?
10) When will *Sensible Soccer* be out on the SNES in the UK, and will it be better than *Kick Off* and *Super Soccer*?
11) Is *Kick Off* better than *Super Soccer*?
12) What is the best game on the SNES? *Super Mario World*, *Street Fighter II* or *Super Mario Kart*?
13) Is Sega's light gun better than the Super Scope, honestly?
14) Which is the best game of the following: *Super Probotector*, *Super Ghouls 'n' Ghosts*, *Turtles IV* and *Final Fight*?
15) Can you explain why the names of the bosses in *Street Fighter II* are mixed up?
Please print this letter – you will be impressing a lot of people at our school! Thanks again!
P.E, J.M, D.S, A.W, O.M, L.J, R.M, F.H, E.B and J.M
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

(Deep breath) You've got a lot of questions, haven't you? Okay, I'll give it my best shot.
1) That's what we've been told.
2) The main character sprites have been changed from soldiers in *Contra* to robots in *Super Probotector*. Apart from that, the two games are exactly the same, so just pick the look you like best. However, the Japanese version – *Contra Spirits* – is a bit different. This has infinite continues, making it easier to finish.
3) Capcom have said no – but then, they've also denied doing a Mega Drive version! Basically, nothing is written in stone yet.
4) I bet there've been a few playground arguments about this one! The rumours that the MD version will be faster could be true – the machine can handle speed better than the Super Nintendo, and the arcade *Champion Edition* the Mega Drive version will be based on was slightly faster than the ordinary coin-op too. Remember, also, that *SFII* running on a UK SNES is approximately 17% slower than it should be. (This is because whenever the UK machine plays a game it plays it at 50Hz, the speed most UK tellies run at, instead of the 60Hz used in the US and Japan). This needn't have been the case – Nintendo could have got Capcom to speed up the UK cart to compensate for this (just look at the *SFII* 'Speed Fighter' mode on a Datel Action Replay cart for proof that the machine can run the game faster) but didn't. Sega may be wise enough to ensure Capcom compensate for the UK PAL Mega Drive's slow(ish) speed (yes, UK Mega Drives run at 50Hz too) to ensure the game runs as fast as it's supposed to. The faster processor in the MD might be able to cope with a bigger screen display too – smaller borders, in other words.

***SF II:Champion Edition* – any chance of it on SNES?**



D'you like the robots in *Super Probotector* or...

... the blokes in *Contra*? The game's the same, whichever.

However, on the downside, expect the Mega Drive version to have less colour and no 3D effect in the foreground – Mode 7 handles that on the SNES. So which is best? It's almost impossible to say at this stage – you'll have to wait and see when (and if) the Mega

Drive version is released before we can really say. And when'll that be? Well, current rumours suggest March, but we'll believe *that* when we see it...
5) *Streets Of Rage* is one of Sega's own creations, so it's very unlikely to ever appear on the SNES – though it's hardly worth worrying about, is it? *EA Hockey* is out – it's reviewed in this issue.
6) Yes, it is, but a restricted viewpoint spoils the playability somewhat. No UK release date yet, I'm afraid.
7) *Road Runner*'s fairly speedy. So is Accolade's forthcoming *Bubsy*.
8) I doubt it – the basic game's too old, and a couple of versions of it already exist. It's doubtful the standard SNES could handle the number of sprites for a two player mode anyway.
9) A general shout around the office saw most people voting for this as the best platform shoot-'em-up. *UN Squadron*'s probably the most challenging 'straight' shoot-'em-up though.
10) Later this year – probably around Christmas. We hope it will be at least as good as the Amiga version, which would make it the best Super NES soccer game, no problem.
11) No, it's far worse (see our review last issue). We're not big *Kick Off* fans here anyway, but everyone should be able to recognise what a poor version of the game this is when we see it.
12) See our 'Games Of The Year' bit in Super Express this issue and we'll tell you. (All three games are works of genius though, and you really should own the lot.)
13) It's certainly as good, but the games packaged with it aren't any better. To be honest, we think they're both pretty poor purchases.
14) Probably *Super Probotector*.
15) Are you ready for this? In the Japanese coin-op and Super Famicom cart, the boxer in Las Vegas is called M Bison. However, because the name sounded too similar to Mike Tyson, and legal trouble was expected, this was changed for the US and Europe. The Western *SFII* coin-ops ended up calling the boxer Balrog instead, and the final boss M Bison. That's why the Japanese version of *SFII* on the Super Famicom seems to you and me to have the names mixed up, though, in fact, that's the way they started out in the first place!

(Phew, I'm glad that's over with!)

Dear Gamefreak,
1) On GamesMaster there was a preview of the sequel to *Out Of This World* (*Another World*) called *Flashback* on the Mega Drive and PC. Will it come out for the SNES?
2) Is *Splatterhouse* coming out for the SNES? I think it's brilliant.
3) Will there be a converter for the SNES to run NES games?
Brett Young, Leicestershire.

1) Interplay haven't confirmed it, but it seems likely – we'll keep you informed.
2) No – it's too old. It's just possible (though unlikely) that one of its sequels will appear though.
3) One *was* planned, but It now looks like Nintendo aren't keen on the idea after all, and it seems unlikely to ever appear. The reason seems to be that being able to play NES games on the Super NES stops the SNES seeming that special somehow.

Dear Gamefreak,
I have recently purchased an official UK SNES after buying issue one of your magazine, and I hope you can clear up a few points for me. After purchasing a US copy of *SFII* and a converter, I was disappointed by the large black borders on the game. At that point I was ready to go out and buy an American SNES and a SCART telly (I'm due for a new telly anyway) – until my brother came round and adjusted the vertical hold inside the telly, which stretched the picture back to the 'proper' size. What an improvement! Why have you not mentioned this? I can understand that you don't want to encourage 10-year-olds to start sticking their fingers in the back of TVs, but it is a solution for someone who has a TV set up just for use with a UK SNES. I'm still keen on getting an American SNES though, and therefore still have a handful of questions to ask:
1) Will my UK power supply work with the US machine?
2) Can I run UK carts on the US machine?
3) How do PAL and SCART versions of the US SNES vary? What TVs do they work on?
4) What's best in your opinion – the PAL or SCART versions of the US SNES?

Finally, I bought just about every Nintendo mag last month and yours was the best laid out, easiest to understand, most informative and the best value – well done!
Rich Walton, Ashford, Middlesex.

You're right, of course. The thing you're talking about is actually called 'vertical size', not 'vertical hold' (at least, it is by the people in the *Amiga Format* office, who are experts at these things) and can easily be adjusted on many computer monitors. Adjusting it on TVs is a much trickier operation, however – we wouldn't advise anybody who doesn't know exactly what they're doing to try it – but yes, it *can* be used to get rid of the borders on UK machines. The problem is that the television picture is then distorted too – as you say, it's only worth getting done if the TV is only used to play games on. Remember, though, despite the fact that you've now got the picture looking as it should, the games will still run slower at 50Hz, so it's only a partial solution.

To answer your other questions:
1) No. Firstly, the US machine has a wider power input socket on the back, and therefore a UK power supply simply doesn't fit. Also, the UK machine requires a slightly higher current because of the TV modulator inside (1.4 amps instead of 0.85 amps), and this might be a bit high for the US machine.
2) Yes, with an adaptor (see this month's Super Express), but be sure to get a recent one that runs games like *Mario Kart* properly.
3) Here's where things get complicated. US (and Jap) machines get imported in various guises nowadays, the most common being the standard 60Hz SCART model. Contrary to what you may have read elsewhere, they do not need to be modified to work on a UK SCART TV – custom plug-in SCART leads and power supplies are usually supplied with them by the importers over here. The only other requirement is that your TV must be able to detect a 60Hz picture (see last month's Gamefreak).

Of course, the same is true for 60Hz PAL versions of both US and Jap machines that plug straight into the normal TV aerial socket. These versions are either modulated internally, or supplied with a plug-in PAL booster (TV modulator) to allow both 60Hz and 50Hz PAL displays. (For 50Hz, a slight internal modification is necessary if you have the PAL booster set-up.) Dual speed PAL machines like these are great if you intend to run your SNES on different TVs, and want the get the best out of it each time. You should still be able to plug in a SCART lead to get the 60Hz SCART display too.

'Customised' machines like this are supplied by various importers. For example, DMC Consoles in Bath, (0225) 448253, sell these machines (the PAL booster set-up) for a competitive £124.99. Incidentally, last month I said DMC converted UK machines to 60Hz – in fact, they don't. Only ACE in London offer this service, and we have no information regarding reliability etc.
4) A PAL picture can never be as clear or colourful as a SCART picture (irrespective of whether it's 60Hz or 50Hz). SCART machines require no modification, and are therefore less likely to encounter problems too.

Dear Gamefreak,
1) In your review of *Super Soccer*, you say you're waiting for *Sensible Soccer*. Is this going to be long in coming or should I buy *Kick Off* in the meantime?
2) You also reviewed *Captain Tsubasu 3* in What Cart? – a Japanese football management game. Is there any chance of this getting translated? Are there any plans for this type of game for us Brits?
Gary Cobb, Gravesend, Kent.

1) Yes, but we're not expecting it before the middle of the year at the earliest. We don't recommend *Kick Off* or it's Japanese predecessor, *Pro Soccer*.
2) This Tecmo game got rave reviews in Japan, but there don't seem to be any plans to bring it over to the States or Europe. We don't know of any other football management simulations either – it's not really the stuff to get SNES owners foaming at the mouth, is it?

Dear Gamefreak,
1) Is *Ranma 1/2* going to be released for the UK SNES?
2) If not, how about the sequel?
3) Will *Fatal Fury* (*King of the Fighters*) be released in the UK?
Spencer Ohm, Dudley, West Midlands.

The original *Ranma 1/2*: Still no Western release.

1) It's not clear yet. The States still hasn't received it, so it'll take quite a while, *if* it arrives at all.
2) The sequel has only just appeared in Japan. There's no news of Nintendo releasing that in any other territories either.
3) We know of at least one UK company that's expressed an interest in bringing over *Fatal Fury* and *King Of The Monsters* by Takara. If the deal goes ahead we'll let you know.

WRITE TO US!

If you've got a Super Nintendo question or problem you think Gamefreak might be able to help you with, send it off to us at Gamefreak, *Super Play*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. We'll do our best to find an answer for you, and print it our next issue.

Captain Tsubasu 3: no news of a UK release.

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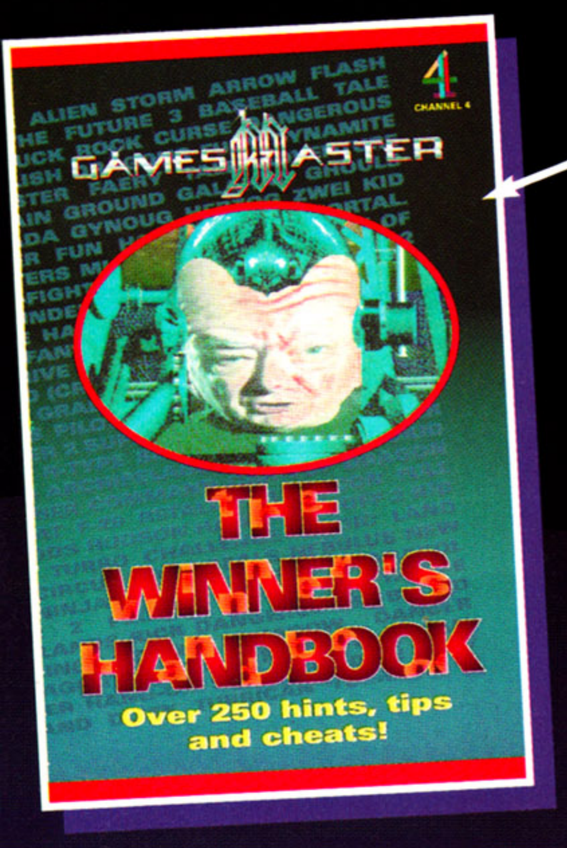
Along with all the news, reviews, previews, celebrity challenges, giant competitions and a particularly diabolical quiz, each issue will sport a truly awesome tips section hosted by the oracle of all gaming knowledge, the GamesMaster himself.

...IS NOW ON PAPER!

IT'S CALLED THE AXELAY DI78 FIGHTER. THIS DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHAT AXELAY ACTUALLY MEANS, THOUGH.
'This is ED-209's big brother who guards the end of level 2. His armoured head is impervious, too.'
'First, shoot out his machine gun. This gives you a breathing space before he attacks you with evil little cluster bombs. Time to dodge and weave.'
'Then the swine starts using his 'total-death-and-maiming-laser'. It fries you instantly, so zip over his head and hang around behind him, safely out of range.'
FOR - SNES
FROM - KONAMI
AVAILABLE - DECEMBER
PRICE - £45
MEMORY - 8Mbits
STOP
WIN AN AXELAY CART! HOW MANY TIMES DOES THE WORD AXELAY APPEAR IN THIS REVIEW?
'Fire at this. It will flash with every hit until he stops wandering back and forth and, in time-honoured fashion, explodes in a hail of shrapnel.'
OPTIONS - 3 SET-UPS
LEVELS - 6
DIFFICULTY - 3 SETTINGS
PLAYERS - 1
SAVE GAME - NO
END
AXELAY
GRAPHICS
Mode 7 at its best. Lots of big, er, things to see, but it does get slow and jerky. Some bits are eye-poppingly good!
SOUNDS
Decent music and a welcome cacophony of blasting, exploding and crashing noises. Nope, nothing wrong here.
PLAYABILITY
Not as good as you'd hope. The different weapons you can choose add a bit of variety, but not much.
LASTABILITY
Six levels! 'Easy' option? Pretty standard game-play throughout? It really isn't going to last all that long.
OVERALL
Axelay is a gorgeous game. Okay, so this gorgeousness slows it occasionally – you can just about live with that if the game-play is excellent, can't you? Ah, but the game-play doesn't quite keep up with the look of it.
If it's a trade-off between graphics and game-play, this one throws its lot firmly on the graphics side, leaving those of us who love a decent bit of game-play feeling slightly miffed. It's not crap, though. In fact it's a promising attempt.
JAMES
Despite all the hype, what Axelay boils down to is a six-level shoot-em-up with some impressive Mode 7 graphics. You take control of a spacecraft fitted with three types of weaponry. Then you simply fly through the missions, destroying all around you.
The scrolling alternates between vertical and horizontal with each level, and once you've selected the weapon which you think is most appropriate, it's a complete blasting frenzy.
The graphics. Just look at them. Konami are really beginning to show what the SNES can do when it's asked nicely. Each level has a totally different style, and they all look gorgeous. Your bullets strike sparks off the steel walls on some of the sideways-scrolling levels and the design of the hundreds of enemies is truly excellent. The amount of detail really gives the whole game a quality feel.
There's a price to pay for having graphics which make your eyes boggle, though. Axelay has the tendency to slow down when you reach crowded bits, especially on the vertical levels.
This is a bit of a downer, and it isn't helped by the fact that the game is too easy. You might lose a life working out how each so-called 'tricky' bit is done, but once you know, you'll be able to get through it every time from then on. There are three difficulty levels, 'Easy' being completable in a few hours. A few more incredibly pretty levels would have made all the difference.
The sound effects and music just about keep up with such attractive graphics. The music isn't as offensive as some you're forced to listen to.
Axelay is a beautiful game, no doubt. But it's too easy, it slows down too noticeably and although there are two scrolling directions, it plays too similarly throughout.
JAMES LEACH
Pipes and chains hang in the skies, and avoiding them takes skill
Swoop over the cliff-top and there's the big city...
I don't know. Axelay is one of the best-looking blasters on the SNES, and I think it's also got the game-play to go with it. Eight different weapons to choose from, with three on each ship is enough for anybody, and the two scrolling styles keep your interest.
I reckon it plays as well as it looks. It does get slow when there are exceptionally large and detailed things on the screen. I forgive Konami for this because they've been brave enough to include the big, detailed sections in all their glory.
So, it's not perfect, but it's a good attempt at a gorgeous shoot-em-up.
JIM DOUGLAS
AXELAY
Here you have to patiently strip the gun-turrets and lasers from the ship. It can't be totally destroyed, but rendering it harmless is good enough
Just when you think you've beaten this guy (above), he reincarnates...
Do brilliant graphics make a brilliant game? Of course not, but they do help a hell of a lot. Axelay isn't a brilliant game from a game-playing point of view, but those nice looks lift it way above many of the other recent SNES offerings.
Another criticism is that there are only the six levels, and in a game like this, I'd have appreciated more. But as it stands, the six that there are soon become very repetitive and will leave you yearning for more. I'd recommend this as one of the better shoot-em-ups on the console (far better than Super R-Type), but not the best.
ADRIAN PRICE
...into this. High above the cowering city it hovers, sending out bolts of lightning death
GAMES MASTER TIP
GREETINGS!
To kill the bosses in Axelay, it's always best to aim for their centres. A burst of fire here is far more effective than a random spraying.
JUDGEMENT 80%
REVIEWS (SNES)
50
51

Maximum information with minimum fuss. Each month, the newest games for all the major formats will be reviewed by our merciless team, including a host of guest reviewers from the show. More grab-maps, more beginner's tips and more facts.



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We'll be reporting on both official and grey import releases, and giving a full release schedule for the whole of 1993.
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PLAY BACK

HYPER EXCITING READER'S VOICE

This month: the case *for* the UK SNES; are Nintendo getting left behind?; where *Super Play* is going wrong; is the Mega Drive swiping all our best games?; games that even parents can play; why do people keep slagging off *Street Fighter II*?; and some very poor jokes. Yes folks, if it's interesting letters you're after, you'll find lots in Play Back.

'YOU SHOULD BE CHUFFED'

I have a few comments to make on the way you are handling the UK vs US/Jap SNES debate. It almost seems that you are trying to dissuade people from 'buying British'. It isn't Nintendo's fault that our inferior PAL systems can't display full screen/full speed images. OK, so it's not such a good buy if you're an absolute techno freak and you demand full speed etc, but for your average gamer (who will own a PAL TV) it's the best choice of the lot and with a decent convertor you have worldwide games choice. After all, exactly the same problems haven't stunted the UK Mega Drive market, have they?

Bandai seem to be getting their act together as far as releases are concerned and the UK SNES market is new and exciting. You should be chuffed about it – if it wasn't for the UK market there wouldn't be much call for your mag, would there? I sold my Mega Drive of two years for a UK SNES six months ago and I haven't looked back since.

Yours,
M Storey, Sheffield.

We're not trying to dissuade people from doing anything. All we're doing is putting the facts before you and letting you draw your own conclusions. And we're well aware that the vast majority of our readers own UK machines and are perfectly happy with them.

'THE MACHINE FOR ME'

On reading issue 1 of your great magazine I was an Amiga owner thinking of buying a SNES After I'd finished the magazine I was convinced the Super NES was the machine for me. Also, with your section 'Super Nintendo: Your Complete Guide', I chose the UK SNES to be right for me.

Yours,
Ben Lambert, London.

See?

'CUTENESS IS LOST'

In issue 2's Anime World, Helen McCarthy mentioned that 'cuteness' depends heavily on the look and the voices of the characters. But what she failed to point out is that, with the exception of *Akira – The Collector's Edition*, all the existing Manga Video releases by Island World are dubs, and some cuteness is lost in the process. I'm not criticizing the English language here, but personally I do prefer them subtitled. For a start, the translations are much closer to the actual Japanese dialogue, and on top of that the characters are more believable with accurate lip-sync. So, unless Island World do something about this, I'll just have to keep getting my videos from specialists and from abroad.

Are there any plans for a *City Hunter* game? Something involving head bashing with a sledgehammer, perhaps?

Sayonara!
Chun Wah Kong, Warrington.

'TOO LATE'

I feel I must write to you on the subject of the games player and his machine. As with most games players, I started off on the scene with a Speccy 48K. I then moved up the range to an Atari ST and a Mega Drive, and now I own what I suspected to be the last word in arcade quality home entertainment at affordable prices. But it seems to me that the games player is no longer important to the manufacturer.

For instance, Sega's Mega Drive is soon to get a UK release for its Mega CD player. Atari has released its amazing Falcon 030, and Commodore has undercut them again with the release of its A1200 model, both 32-bit machines, both capable of incredible things. As if this was not enough, I recently read in *Electronic Gaming Monthly* (Nov '92) that Sega are concentrating on their 32-bit Giga Drive machine and that Atari are on line to release their 64-bit miracle machine, the RISC-based Jaguar console!

Where, may I ask, are Nintendo in all of this commotion? According to *EGM*, they have shelved production of the SNES CD-ROM system till August 1993 in favour of their 32-bit RISC-based Super FX chip and their Seat Digital Signal Processor chip, saying that they don't think CD-based software is any improvement on current cartridge-based games! I am worried that by the time Nintendo release their CD-ROM system it will be too late to make the same impact as, say, the Jaguar may make (if it is as good as American sources make it out to be). Then there's Sega's Mega CD and Giga Drive, Commodore's A1200 and Atari's Falcon 030 and to an extent NEC's TurboDuo CD system.

Companies seem to be churning hardware out not for the customers, but to compete in a sort of civil war in technology: who can get the biggest colour palette, the best sound, the fastest games the most arcade quality. In the end it's the punter who's going to lose out – not everyone has the money to go out and buy updates and new machines every few months.

Yours sincerely,
Adam Leitch, Halstead.

'TOO LONG'

I've got the first two issues of your magazine, but I have one problem. Why does it only come out every month? That is far too long for us to wait. It should come out at least every two weeks.

Yours sincerely,
Stephen Mercer,
Heckmondwike.

What the hell? Let's bring it out every week. Or how about every day? Wibble.

'A NUMBER OF POINTS'

Congratulations on putting together a superb magazine each month. It's nice to see that it has the high quality of all Future Publishing magazines. The mag is well structured and the reviews are fair and informative.

Having said that, I have a number of points I would like to raise having read the first two issues of *Super Play*.

1) Can you please be more careful when choosing background colours for the boxed text. In issue 2 there was one letter that was printed in black text on a blue background which made it very hard to read.

2) On the half-page reviews, can you include the number of players

available in the information box at the top of the review?
3) How about moving the player's guides to a booklet on the front cover, thus leaving more room inside the mag for other features?
4) Maybe you could include an on-going UK release list, possibly in the format of game name, publisher, price etc and a small screenshot with an overall percentage.
5) Would it be possible to include an advertiser's index for quick reference to all the mail order companies advertising in the mag?
6) Some new subscription offers would be nice. Maybe one with a free binder.
7) Are you going to be printing some *Super Play* T-shirts?
8) Expand Mode 7! The tips and cheats are really useful.
9) The programmer interviews are a great idea but would benefit from a wider range of questioning.
Yours,
Anthony Greenfield, Marlborough.

1) Er... (*Look, mistakes happen, all right? – Traci.*)
2) To get a whole review to fit into half a page, something has to give, and the number of players is currently one of them. Should we stick it in at the expense of, say, 'Cart ROM'? We'll give it some thought.
3) How about moving the reviews into it as well? And maybe the news? Hmm...
4) Well, you can deduce that sort of information from a combination of What Cart? and your collection of *Super Play* back issues.
5) We rang up Alison, our advertising person, to ask why not. But she was out.
6) We think our current offer is pretty groovy, though this is the last chance you'll get to take advantage of it. Look out for a new subs offer next month!
7) They're rolling off the weaving looms as we speak.
8) All right! We have! (A bit.)
9) Feel free to give us some idea of the sort of questions you'd like us to ask these people and we'll, er, ask them.

'CERTAIN DEATH FOR THE SUPER NES'

The other day I was flicking through a American magazine and it said that Konami and Capcom are both developing Sega games. This quite worried me, because it means that amazing games like *Street Fighter II*, *Castlevania* and *Contra/Probotector* will be coming out on the Mega Drive. I think this is bad news because Nintendo now have no exclusive software companies working only for them. Could this spell certain death for the Super NES, as Sega now have all Nintendo's advantages plus more of their own? Also, will Capcom slow down their release rate on the Super NES? Why did they turn to Sega after so many years of loyalty? Are they unhappy?
Yours sincerely,
Sam Dowler, Elstree.

That's rather a (dare we say) selfish attitude. Why shouldn't Mega Drive owners enjoy some of the Super Nintendo's top games? (After all, they haven't got much else to be grateful for – ho ho.) And it's not like we're getting nothing in return, either: *Desert Strike*? *John Madden '93*? Plus, of course, there are plenty of games Mega Drive owners definitely won't be getting their hands on. Can you really imagine *Mario Kart* without Mode 7? (Or Mario?)

'WHAT IS THE EASIEST GAME ON THE SNES?'

I would just like to say that your magazine is the first magazine with full reviews and not finishing them half-way. (*Er, thanks, I think – Ed.*)

I would also like to say that the quality of your screenshots is superb.

I would be very grateful if you would answer a few of my questions in your magazine:
1) I am hoping to get *Hook* for Christmas because I think the graphics look very good (thanks to your magazine). I can't really spend more than £45, so are there any other games you can recommend to me for this price?
2) I have had the idea of small demo carts on the front of magazines. Would you please inform me if this would boost the cost of a magazine beyond anyone's pocket money?
3) Which game would you think would be good for my parents? Because, to be honest, they are pretty crap at most games. They can't win a point on *Super Tennis*, they can't win a race on *F-Zero* and they can't beat a level on *Super Mario World*. Basically, what is the easiest game on the Super NES?
Yours sincerely,
Craig Eley, Bideford.

1) There are loads of games we'd recommend within your price range. Not here, though – read through the magazine.
2) It depends. Does £20 or so a month sound reasonable to you?
3) Games we've 'condemned' in the past for being too easy include *Dinosaurs*, *Mickey's Magical Quest*, *Cosmo Gang* and *Top Gear*. We'd recommend any of those to people who are struggling with trickier games. It might also be worth trying them out on something like *Irem Skins*, where it doesn't matter if you keep messing it up. *Zelda* might be worth a shot, too. Or you could always suggest they practice a bit.

KINDLY LEAVE THE STAGE

A new section of Play Back to which we consign the appalling jokes you seem to have begun sending us.
(The name? It just seemed to fit, somehow...)

Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, denied today that his face was to be on the new £10 note, saying that it was more than his job was worth.
Max Hedge, Sheffield.

A man goes into a pet shop and buys a hamster. He takes it home, puts it in a cage and goes to sleep. Next morning, he finds it dead. He takes it back to the shop.
'Excuse me, this hamster I bought here just died.'
'Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. Tell you what, take it home and make it into jam, and then spread it on your lawn.'
The man does so. Next morning, he looks out of the window and his lawn's covered with daffodils. He goes back to the shop.
'Excuse me, I did what you said and now my lawn's covered in daffodils.'
'Oh, that's strange. You usually get tulips from hamster jam.'
Max Hedge, Sheffield.

If you'd like to send us a joke, the address is Kindly Leave The Stage, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. We'd really rather you didn't, though.

'STUPID PEOPLE AROUND BRITAIN'

I will soon be the proud owner of a SNES with *Street Fighter II*. *SFII* is my favourite game in the universe so it really makes me steamed when these stupid people hidden around Britain write in to say how bad it is. These people should have their brains boiled for half an hour and then roasted.
Thanks a lot,
Daniel Goatley, Southampton.

Er... what?

THAT'S IT!

Perhaps it's just as well, with the way things were heading, but that's all we've got space for this month. If you've got anything you'd like to say, or a question you really want to ask, we'd love to hear from you. Don't forget, there's a fab *Super Play* pen for everyone who gets a letter printed. Write to us (go on!) at PLAY BACK, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.
Talk to ya!

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PAL and SCART
Matt Bielby

COMPO WINNERS!

If you entered either of the competitions in issue 1 of *Super Play*, and you've been holding your breath ever since, you can breathe out now. (Phew.) Here's a list of everyone who won things.

GRAND OPENING COMPETITION

To celebrate the first issue of *Super Play*, we had all *sorts* of things to give away. The winners are...

A TERMINATOR 2 LEATHER JACKET FROM OCEAN goes to: Daniel Burgess of Liverpool.

AN ACCOLADE T-SHIRT goes to: N P Lewis of Cannock, Tom Powell of Helston, Harvey McGillivary of Carlisle, David Conway of Peterborough, Matthew Cremore of Falmouth, David Thompson of Winslow, Gary Sharp of Banff, Andrew Taylor of Glossop, Jon Hadlow of Chatham, Mark Dover of Bolton, Liam Urtone of Sandy, Brett Wilson of Doncaster, Robert Carr of Poole, Terry Aked of Waterlooville, Philip Clarke of Hauxton, S Mulincaine of Solihull, K Maguire of Stockport, Joseph Baxter of Sheffield, I Green of Mexborough and S J Stevenson of Romford.

AN ELECTRONIC ARTS T-SHIRT goes to: Neil Bleakley of Newtownabbey, Colin Kent of London, Patrick Lloyd of Stafford, Andrew Russell of Royston, J Watts of Taunton, Brian Phelan of South Croydon, Liam Hurley of Edinburgh, Aaron Madin of Alfreton, Graham Hill of Benfleet and Christian Flether of Abergavenny.

A YEAR'S SUPPLY OF JALECO GAMES goes to: Chay Thornborough of Radlett and Scott Brennan of Cosham.

A MICROPROSE GOODY-BAG goes to: D Spenser of Colchester, A Mooney of Swindon, Sean Atkinson of Luton, Craig Degnan of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Ross Bowerman of Crewe, Stuart Hall of Streatham, Darius Fernandez of St Albans, Chris Harris of Watton-at-Stone, M Barker of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and W Tate of Maryport.

A YEAR'S SUPPLY OF IMAGINEER GAMES goes to: Edward Metcalfe of Chiswick.

A COPY OF JOE & MAC FROM ELITE goes to: David Horne of Glasgow, P Hillier of Wrexham, Gregor MacGregor in Northern Ireland, Ben Watson of The Wirral, and Steven Carter of Windsor.

A MINDSCAPE T-SHIRT goes to: Huw Parry of Cardiff, J Cooper of Bermondsey, Paul McGraith of Dunstable, Peter McCarthy of Cricklewood, Patrick Shepherd of Aberdeen, Robert Allen of Millom, Chris Styles of York, Nicholas Marsh of Corby, Kryss Nash of Dover, Clare Reynolds of Banbury, John Vong of Manchester, G Palmer of Workington, Daniel Moss of Birmingham, Ben Keenan of Birmingham, Nicholas Hudson of Walton-on-Thames, Paul Dutton of Bolton, Kirsty Ackland of Ashton-under-Lyne, Jonathon Howard of Skelmersdale, Andrew Brown of Fleetwood and Lynne Meston of North Berwick.

A YEAR'S SUPPLY OF UBI SOFT GAMES goes to: C Dixon of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

A GREMLIN GRAPHICS GOODY BAG goes to: Dunstan Low of Bolton, Matthew Hird of Huddersfield, Jason Eldridge of Margate, Harvey Barnes of Northampton, M Limb of Doncaster, Christopher Whitham of Burnley, Gary Ewens of Andover, Ben Hurst of Romsey, K McLean of Huntingdon and Malcolm Mabe of Havant.

A NINTENDO GAME BOY FROM KONAMI goes to: M Newell of Harwich

A SUPER PLAY GOODY BAG goes to: G Pietroni of Woodford Green, Matthew Davies of Taunton, Sean Higgins of Shipley, Roy Cadman of Tipton, Nathan Fullwood of Tynemouth, John Legg of Buckie, Stephen Brusell of Derby, Robert Aberdein of Aberdeen, D Briley of Lincoln and Leon Willis of Rotherham.

WIN A SUPER ADAPTOR COMPETITION

We had 25 Super Adaptors from Games Galore to give away in issue 1. The winners are... David Nguyen of Maidstone, Australia, Ben Ireland of Purley, Chris Clapton of Camberley, David Gatrell of Sale, Jonathan Trovor of Lancaster, Chris Sorsby of Harrogate, Robert Young of Alloa, Sean Stewart of Arbroath, B Christmas of Rotherham, Graham Marshall of Keniworth, L Bennett of Bridgend, Richie Da Silva of London, R Cadman of Tipton, Innes McNeill of Glasgow, Daniel Broadbent of Lowdham, Andrew McDonald of Glasgow, Carl McMurdo of Ashington, Jason Byng of Woodhouse, Matthew Andrews of Sudbury, Glenn Davis of Argyll, Tim Sampson of Lowestoft, Andrew Beagazie of North Shields, Sevan Janiyan of Hove, Darren Edmonds of Southampton and Mark Harrison of Horsham.

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- SNES, US SCART version with *Mario* and *Contra III*, free universal adaptor, £130. Phone (021) 360 7019.
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- *Zelda III* (Jap) and *Super Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* for sale. £30 each. Tel: (071) 226 6275.
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- SNES games: Jap *Axelay*, *Parodius*, *Top Racer*, *Thunder Spirits*, *Area 88* £35 each. US *F-Zero*, *Populous*, *Combat Basketball* £35 each. Phone (051) 426 0138.
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- *Super Tennis*, *Super Soccer* and *Super Wrestlemania* for Super NES, all boxed, £80 for all three or £30 each. Phone (0750) 20957.
- *Super Battletank* (US), *Pilotwings* (US), *Lemmings* (UK), £25 each or swap. Call (0349) 852177 after 6 pm.

WANTED

- Badly wanted: good quality second-hand SNES games, namely *UN Squadron*, *Super Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* or any other good titles. Phone 0725 21969.
- Super NES and Mega Drive games. Will pay up to £25. Phone after 7 pm on (0463) 221173.
- Super Nintendo games wanted. £15-20. Also swap games. For a list tel: (061) 434 3545.
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WHAT CART?

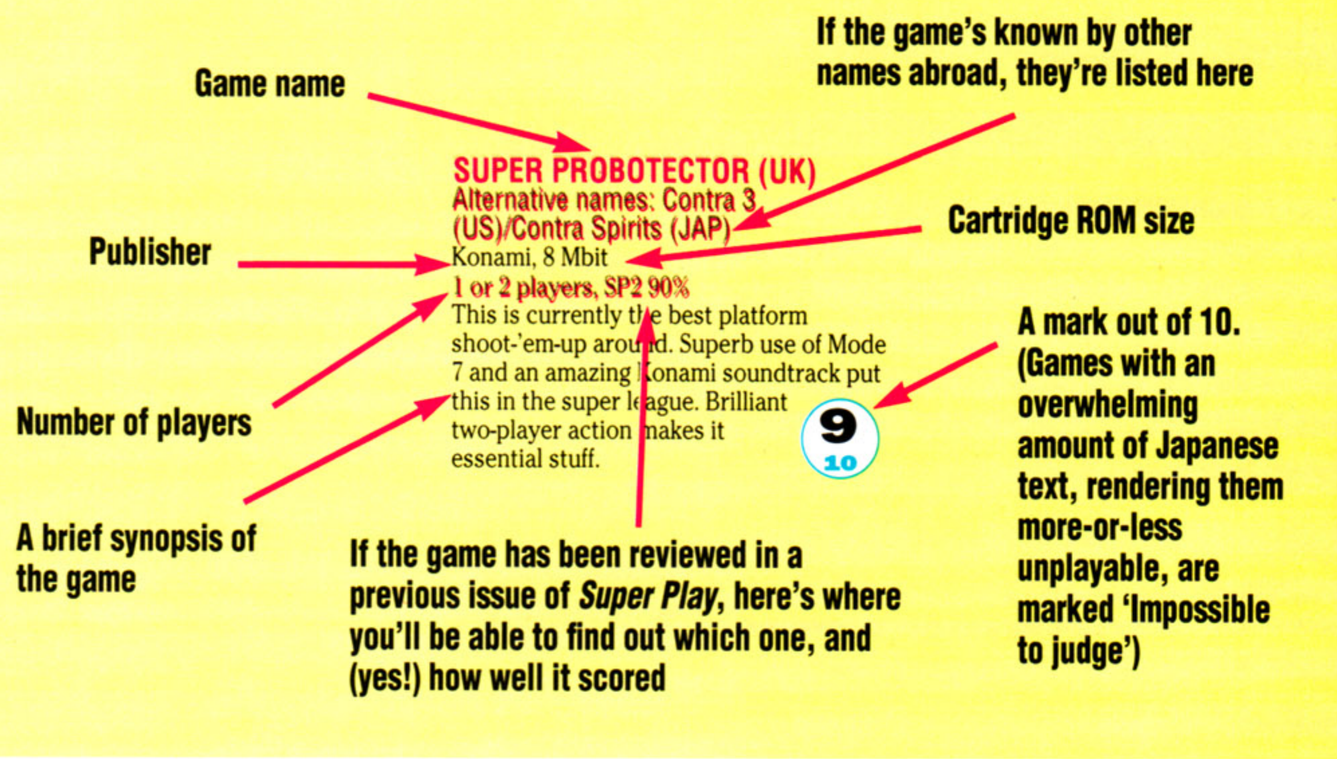
SUPER PLAY'S GAME LIBRARY

Welcome to What Cart?, *Super Play*'s constantly updated - and rather glorious - game library. If there's a more comprehensive, more accurate guide to Super Nintendo games from Japan, America or the UK in existence anywhere, we've yet to see it. Currently What Cart? is running at around 160 games, give or take a few (to be honest, we've not counted) - if anyone ever tells you that there aren't enough games available for the Super NES, you know how to prove them wrong... (Show them this, you dolt.)

Remember - though What Cart? is the most comprehensive SNES guide in existence, there may still be a handful of games out there that we've missed. If you know of one, why not write in to tell us, complete with a short What Cart?-style review of the game. (See the handy diagram showing exactly what we mean by 'What Cart?-style'.) If the game is genuinely new (and not one we've already covered under a different name, say, or some sort of completely useless Japanese text-filled RPG job) we'll use your review and you'll get - new this month! - a rather fab *Super Play* T-shirt. Write to us at What Cart?, *Super Play*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

KEY TO YOUR CHART

You wouldn't believe how easy *What Cart?* is to understand. Perhaps this diagram might go some way to convincing you, though:


Game name
If the game's known by other names abroad, they're listed here
SUPER PROBOTECTOR (UK)
Alternative names: Contra 3 (US)/Contra Spirits (JAP)
Publisher
Konami, 8 Mbit
Cartridge ROM size
1 or 2 players, SP2 90%
This is currently the best platform shoot-'em-up around. Superb use of Mode 7 and an amazing Konami soundtrack put this in the super league. Brilliant two-player action makes it essential stuff.
9
10
Number of players
A mark out of 10. (Games with an overwhelming amount of Japanese text, rendering them more-or-less unplayable, are marked 'Impossible to judge')
A brief synopsis of the game
If the game has been reviewed in a previous issue of Super Play, here's where you'll be able to find out which one, and (yes!) how well it scored

ACROBAT MISSION (JAP)
Teichiku, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 38%
A despicably feeble vertical scroller. (Not a good start.)
3/10

ACTRAISER (JAP/US/UK)
Enix/Quintet, 6/8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 90%
A brilliant combination of strategy and platform action. Graphically it's well done, but the visuals are left eating dust by the fab music. Buy the UK or US version.
9/10

THE ADDAMS FAMILY (JAP/US/UK)
Ocean, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 82%

Not the last word in platform games, but still a polished and enjoyable romp. A large game, featuring well-integrated adventure, puzzle and shoot-'em-up elements, providing an addictive challenge that gets frustrating in places, although a password system allows quick completion.
8/10

AGURI SUZUKI F1 SUPER DRIVING (JAP)
LOZC, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Fast, 3D Mode 7 courses *and* tunnels and bridges? This game is extremely well presented, but suffers from the unfortunate no-warning-of-corners problem that seems to plague so many SNES driving games. If you can live with that, however, the split-screen two-player mode is a definite bonus.
7/10

AIR MANAGER (JAP)
Koei, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 4 players
Unfortunately unintelligible unless you're fluent in Japanese, this is a quite well presented business strategy thing along the lines of *Railroad Tycoon*. Nice Mode 7 intro. Impossible to judge.
?/10

ARCANA (US)
Alternative name: Card Master (JAP)
HAL, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player

An RPG based around a 3D perspective (like *Dungeon Master*) sounds good, but it suffers from a very plodding pace – the combat scenes are particularly long and drawn out. Graphically it's not bad, and the music is well done, but only really recommended for die-hard RPG fans.
6/10

ASTRAL BOUT (JAP)
A-Wave, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A wrestling/fighting game, and not a very good one at that. Graphically not a complete disaster, but the sprite collision and playability are very ropy. When you think you could buy *Street Fighter II* instead, what's the point?
4/10

AUGUSTA MASTERS 3D GOLF (JAP)
T&E Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 4 players
The first 3D golf game on the Super Famicom, and still rather good despite Japanese text. Graphically, it's a mixture of bit-maps and polygons and it works quite well. The screen update could be faster, though.
8/10

AXELAY (JAP/US/UK)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 85%
Okay, so *Axelay*'s a little thin gameplay-wise. But – ooh! – those graphics! They're possibly the most impressive ones ever! There are also some mind-boggling baddies, and the game alternates between neat horizontal and vertical scrolling.
8/10

BART'S NIGHTMARE (US)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 91%
The formula may not sound promising – lots of little sub-games rather than one big one – but this is absolutely superb, and very weird. Wonderful graphics and lots of humour, and it's challenging.
9/10

BATTLEBLAZE (JAP)
Sammy Corp, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players

An awkward game that's nowhere near as good as its contemporaries (in this case *Street Fighter II* and *Ranma 1/2*). Graphics are okay, the sound's okay, it plays okay and there's a reasonable range of moves, but you could do much better.
5/10

BATTLE CLASH (US)
Nintendo, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 48%
This is the first stand-alone game released for the system. A shame that it's so short lived and laughably bad. Cheaper than your average import, though.
4/10

BATTLE GRAND PRIX (JAP)
Naxat, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Remember *Super Sprint*, the coin-op? Well, imagine a version of it (ie an overhead view driving game) where you can only see a tiny area of the track around your car, and have to rely on little signals to warn you of corners. We had a bit of trouble with this one, eventually coming to the conclusion that it's 'challenging'. Lots of babes in it, though.
6/10

BIG RUN (JAP)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 player
After a promising front end, and a couple of good tunes, the abysmal graphics and virtually non-existent gameplay make for what is surely the worst driving game on the system. (Nothing like the original coin-op.)
2/10

BILL LAIMBEER'S COMBAT BASKETBALL (US)
Hudson Soft, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Originally an Amiga game called *Future Basketball*, this plodding speedball clone is a surprisingly poor release from Hudson Soft.
3/10

BLAZEON (JAP/US)
Atlus, 8 Mbit
1 player

A tacky horizontal scroller with anime-style robots in. It's kinda different, but everything's so crude and jerky. That makes this game crap – there are so many better shoot-'em-ups to choose from.
3/10

BOMBUZAL
Alternative name: Ka-Blooey (US)
Kemco, 4 Mbit
1 player
You have to clear bombs from mazes of tiles by setting off chain reactions, without getting blown up yourself – the levels are well designed and it takes lots of skill to negotiate them. But unfortunately the graphics are extremely dreary, and the game's absolutely boring to play. Not recommended.
4/10

CAMELTRY (JAP)
Alternative name: On The Ball (US)
Taito, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 52%

The idea of a rotating Mode 7 maze with a ball bouncing around it is a good one, but Taito haven't got the most from it. The levels are too easy to complete, and once you've seen them all you won't return.
5/10

CB WARS (JAP)
Banpresto, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A strange anime-scroll-along-and-whack-nasties-with-whatever-you-can-find-type of game. RPG elements and lots of Japanese text render this a poor choice for most people. Impossible to judge.
?/10

CHESSMASTER (US)
Mindscape, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
If you're after a chess game you really don't have much choice. This plays a strong game (we, er, think), but there's room for improvement. It's really awfully presented, and the tunes after each move are really irritating. And check out that amazing menu!
5/10

COSMO GANG (JAP)
Namco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 70%
A *Galaga*-style shoot-'em-up that doesn't match up to the ancient coin-op in the gameplay stakes. A fun two-player mode, and some lovely graphics and sound, but spoilt by infinite continues.
7/10

DARIUS TWIN (JAP/US)
Taito, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Lacking in levels for a *Darius* game – but

this isn't all bad news. Good graphics, reasonable sound and not too much slow-down for an early title make it a reasonable buy, though it's not challenging enough in the first few levels. 7/10

DAVID CRANE'S AMAZING TENNIS (US/JAP)
Absolute Entertainment, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 80%

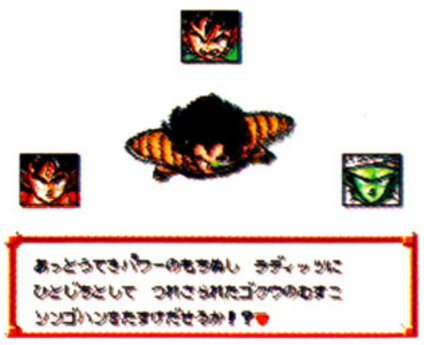
At first this looks like the best tennis game yet. The 3D perspective works astonishingly well – until you take control of a player at the opposite end, that is. A restricted viewpoint makes it difficult to serve and return, meaning a split screen perspective would have worked better. It's good, but *Super Tennis* still rules. 8/10

D FORCE (JAP/US)
Asmik, 8 Mbit
1 player
An absolutely appalling shoot-'em-up with maybe the worst graphics, sound and playability on the SNES. Subtle use of Mode 7 gives the useless visuals a blocky appearance. Dreadful sound, too. Avoid! 2/10

DINOSAURS (JAP)
Alternative name: Dino City (US)
Irem, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 83%
One of *Super Play*'s favourite platform games ever, this has brilliant graphics, cute characters and plenty of amusing moments. The snag is, it's too easy to finish. But we love it all the same. 8/10

DIRTY CHALLENGER (JAP)
8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Yet another dire wrestling game. This time it includes some very dubious 'grapples' – you could be mistaken for thinking it was all a bit, well, dirty. 3/10

DRAGON BALL Z (JAP)
Bandai, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player



The original Japanese *Dragon Ball* anime series has appeared on the 8-bit Famicom (NES), but this new version is the first available for the Super Famicom. Basically, an RPG with combat scenes and enough Japanese text to scare away the most persistent gamer. Extremely 8-bit in look too. Impossible to judge. ?/10

DRAGON'S LAIR (UK)
Elite, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP1 82%
This looks absolutely gorgeous, plays well and is far better than the straight conversion of the coin-op that some other machines have suffered. But the frustrating difficulty level hides a game not as lengthy as it might have been. 8/10

DRAGON QUEST V (JAP)
Enix, 12 Mbit + BB
1 player
The biggest selling game in Japan to date is a massive sprawling RPG crammed full of text boxes and, of course, plenty of Japanese to be translated for an American release next year in the *Dragon Warrior* series. It's deceptively primitive looking, and extremely Japanese. Impossible to judge. ?/10

DRAKKHEN (JAP/US)
Kemco, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
Based on a French 16-bit computer RPG/adventure, this has reasonable graphics but an awful combat system. Most people will find this a real bore – even avid RPG fans – but if you *are* tempted, make sure you get the US or UK version. 6/10

EARTHLIGHT (JAP)
Hudson Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
Based on a popular PC Engine game called *Nectaris*, this is an interplanetary space strategy affair, but there's enough Japanese in here to make it tricky to work out. Avoid. Impossible to judge. ?/10

EXTRA INNINGS (JAP/US)
Alternative name: Ganba League Baseball (JAP)
Sony Imagesoft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP2 64%
Baseball's tricky to translate well to a games machine, but this probably makes the best job of it, with cute characters and slick action. If you really must have a baseball game, then go for this one. 6/10

FACEBALL 2000 (US)
Bullet-Proof Software, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 54%
On the Game Boy this 3D maze shoot-'em-up is good fun, but the SNES conversion suffers badly. Slow, jerky 3D and confusing with two players. Avoid. 5/10

F-1 EXHAUST HEAT (JAP)
Alternative names: F1 ROC (US), Exhaust Heat (UK)
Ocean/Seta, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 69%
Your car looks a bit small. And you don't get much warning of corners, so unless you keep one eye on the map, you'll keep crashing. But at least you get a proper 3D view of the track. Not our favourite, but some people love it to bits. 6/10

FINAL FANTASY II (US)
Alternative name: Final Fantasy IV (JAP)
Square, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
A strange one this, as in Japan it's the fourth in a very popular series. This is the first version to make it to the SNES, and while it's graphically basic, the lovely music and the involving nature of the quest lifts it way above lesser RPGs. 8/10

FINAL FANTASY: MYSTIC QUEST (US)
Squaresoft, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP3 79%

A spin-off younger players' version of the popular *Final Fantasy* RPG series that proves to be an enjoyable and involving quest for role playing beginners. Much cheaper than most releases, too. 7/10

FINAL FIGHT (JAP/US/UK)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 86%
The best walking-along-beating-people-up game on the SNES. On the plus side are its brilliant graphics, varied opposition and devastating moves. On the minus side? Well, it lacks a two-player mode, and therefore tends to get a little dull in the long-term. 8/10

FINAL FIGHT GUY (JAP)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player
A pointless new version of *Final Fight* where the best character, Cody, gets the chop, and Guy replaces him. A poor game-music CD is included. The game is slightly easier than the original. 8/10

FIRE DODGEBALL (JAP)
Sunsoft, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players

A cute, anime version of a very weird game (see *SD Dodgeball* for details). The graphics are pretty good, but the game itself is a bit too simple to be particularly rewarding. The lengthy intro sequences before each game don't help, either. 6/10

F-ZERO (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP1 86%
A fabulous Mode 7 racing game. Dead fast and dead smooth. And dead deadly, if you don't watch out for the vicious computer-controlled hover cars. Bland scenery and an unlikely futuristic setting are unfortunate, but it's an impressive demonstration of just what the SNES can do. 8/10

GEORGE FOREMAN'S KO BOXING (US)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 18%
Boxing games are invariably awful – but this awful? 1/10

GOLDEN FIGHTER (JAP)
Culture Brain, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 42%
A very ropy *Street Fighter II* 'tribute'. The graphics are rubbish, the gameplay's rubbish, the sound's rubbish... One to avoid. 4/10

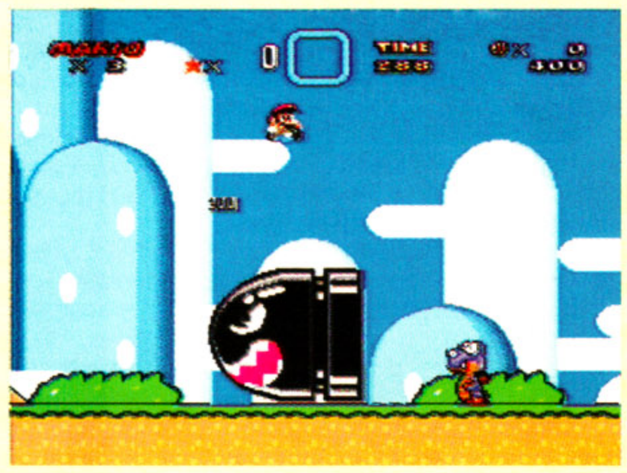
GPX CYBER FORMULA (JAP)
Alternative name: Cyberspin (US)
Takara, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 70%

Another top-view scroller, and another case of yikes-was-that-a-corner? But this

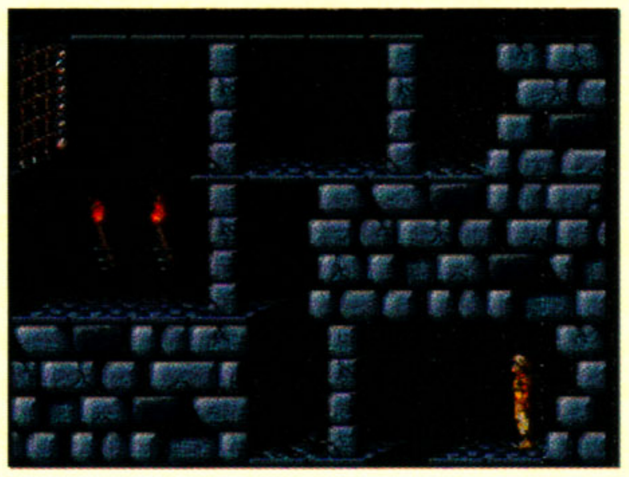
INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE
SUPER PLAY

TOP 5 PLATFORM GAMES

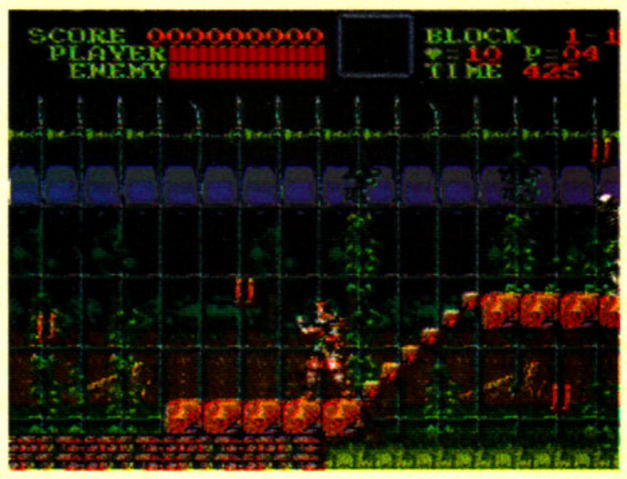
Think of a Super Nintendo game and (nine times out of ten) you'll think of something with platforms in. The Super NES has oodles of completely brilliant ones – so many, in fact, that picking our favourites is very difficult indeed. Here, though, after much deliberation, is the current state of thinking in *this* office. (It'll all have changed by next month, of course...)



1 SUPER MARIO WORLD (94%)
(Obviously.) Not that special at first glance, but impossible to put down. Enormous, highly imaginative, and probably one of the best games ever.



2 PRINCE OF PERSIA
The fab animation is only half the story. A massive game, with a surprise round every corner. So challenging you deserve a medal if you finish it.



3 SUPER CASTLEVANIA IV (91%)
Like Mario, this doesn't look like anything out of the ordinary at first. But it gets better, featuring some brill Mode 7 levels. Great music, too.

4 MICKEY'S MAGICAL QUEST (89%)
The best *looking* platform game on the Super NES, and it plays splendidly, thanks to Mickey's costume changes, etc. But it's too easy.

5 DINOSAURS (83%)
Okay, so it's far too easy to finish. But who cares when it's been as lovingly designed as this? Really funny, nice-looking and very imaginative.

time, for a change, we've got anime characters racing in anime cars. And really smooth scrolling. Average. 6/10

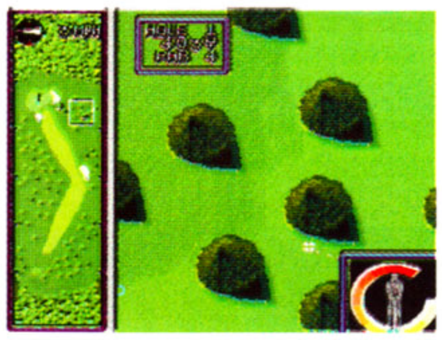
GRADIUS III (JAP/US)
Konami, 4 Mbit
1 player

Similar to the coin-op and – astonishingly – all packed onto a 4 meg cart, this is one to check out. It's an early title, so slow-down is a problem – it rather scuppers the otherwise beautiful graphics and powerful sound. Still, it's more impressive and playable than *Super R-Type*. 7/10

GUNDAM F-91 (JAP)
Bandai, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
A huge selling (in Japan) arcade/strategy game, with Japanese text. Still playable if you are willing to persevere, but essentially one for robot fans only. 6/10

HAT TRICK HERO (JAP)
Alternative name: Super Soccer Champ (US)
Taito, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A slick conversion of the coin-op *Football Champ*. It's incredibly fast, but rather too easy in one-player mode – you'll need to play a chum to have any fun. Not as good as *Super Soccer*. 7/10

HOLE-IN-ONE GOLF (JAP/US)
HAL, 8 Mbit
1 to 4 players



A fairly old game, but still one of the best golf sims available – what it lacks in technical ingenuity, it makes up for in simple pick-up-and-play user friendliness. The overhead view used isn't much like playing the real game, but nice Mode 7 course introductions help – as does turning the music off! 7/10

HOME ALONE (JAP/US/UK)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP 36%
A dire attempt to cash in on the success of the movie. Hopeless graphics and sound do nothing to rescue the banal gameplay from the claws of drudgery and tedium. A waste of money. 3/10

HOME ALONE 2 (US)
THQ, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 32%
We actually preferred the first *Home Alone* game to this, but in the same way that we prefer *Eldorado* to *Santa Barbara*. Another dire scrolling effort that should be left on the shelf. Feeble and predictable. 3/10

HOOK (JAP/US)
Sony Imagesoft, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 72%
Slow-moving, but otherwise an attractive platformer that ties in with the film quite neatly. It's a bit easy to finish, though, so it'll be no, er, Peter Pan. 7/10

HYPERZONE (JAP/US)
Hal, 8 Mbit
1 player
A poor 3D space shoot-'em-up using Mode 7, but with nothing else to recommend it. Tedium City is your only destination with this. 3/10

IREM SKINS GAME (US)
Alternative name: Major Title (JAP)
Irem, 8 Mbit,
1 or 2 players, SP3 83%
Fans of the coin-op golf game *Major Title* will love this – it's virtually identical in every way. Fans of *Pebble Beach* and its cousins might not be that impressed by its accuracy, however. 8/10

JACK NICKLAUS GOLF (US)
Tradewest, 4 Mbit
1 to 4 players, SP3 62%
Fans of golf games that present things from just behind the player will like the look of this, but the painfully slow way it draws the screen before each shot, not to mention the could-be-better power meter, muck everything up. Not one of our favourites, but it will find its supporters. 6/10

JAMES BOND JR (US)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 29%

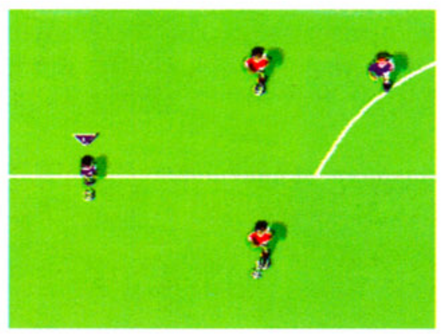
A platform and shooting action game from hell that even Amstrad GX4000 wouldn't have tolerated. Poor graphics, feeble sound and banal game-play. Look, but don't touch. (On second thoughts don't bother). 2/10

JERRY BOY (JAP)
Alternative name: Smartball (US)
Sony Imagesoft, 8 Mbit
1 player
A run-of-the-mill platform game with only its blob-shaped hero to distinguish it from the crowd. Very average. 6/10

JOE AND MAC (JAP/US/UK)
Data East/Elite, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 72%
A good conversion of the original arcade machine, with a few bits missing, and a few more added. Graphically it's colourful, but the tunes don't vary and the gameplay becomes repetitive. Not much of challenge, but young players should enjoy it. 7/10

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL (JAP/ US)
Electronic Arts, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
What was a fab game on the Mega Drive and Amiga doesn't work on the SNES. The programmers weren't equipped to convert it, note the uninspiring graphics. The official UK release (*John Madden '93* – reviewed this ish) – makes amends. 5/10

KICK OFF (UK)
Anco/Imagineer, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP3 52%



The most controversial computer game ever gets its second conversion to the SNES, and suffers as a result. Not as bad as *Pro Soccer*, but still flawed in the playability stakes. 5/10

KING OF THE MONSTERS (JAP)
Takara, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A fairly enjoyable Neo Geo game that seems to have been clumsily converted to the SNES. It's really too dull and unimpressive to get even fans of the original excited. 5/10

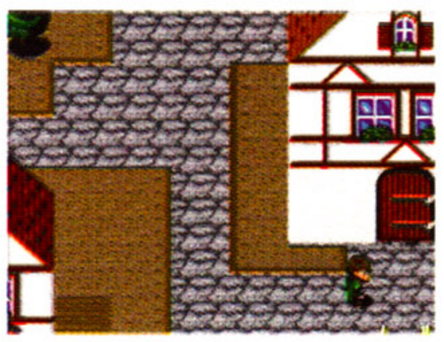
KOSHIYEN 2 (JAP)
KAC, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 70%
This would be the most bog standard baseball game except that it's very weird and very Japanese. Not bad, overall. 7/10

KRUSTY'S SUPER FUN HOUSE (US/UK)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 79%

A curious blend of pie-throwing, puzzle-solving and platform action make this a refreshing challenge. Graphics and sound are reasonable, but it's the excellently paced gameplay that makes the game. Passwords should be given more regularly to reduce repetition though. 7/10

KUNIO KEN (JAP)
Technos, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
An odd mix of beat-'em-up and adventure game. We had fun with it, beating people with pillows and suitcases, but we didn't have a clue what was going on as it's all in Japanese. You might be able to suss it out, but it got a lukewarm reception even in Japan. ?/10

LAGOON (JAP/US)
Kemco, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player



A fairly involving RPG, taking some elements from the *Zelda* series, but forgetting a lot of the more important ones – including a map, which can prove extremely irritating in certain areas. However, the graphics and sound are pleasant enough. Worth considering, but only after you've played *Zelda*, *Final Fantasy II* and *Soul Blazer*. 7/10

LAST FIGHTER TWIN (JAP)
Banpresto, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Super Deformer robots in a side-on beat-'em-up. Nice graphically and sonically, but limited all the same. For SD fans only. 6/10

LEGEND OF THE MYSTICAL NINJA (US)
Alternative name: Goeman 3 (JAP)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
One of the best games for the system, mixing RPG adventure-style wandering with side-on platform action. Wonderful oriental music, beautifully drawn graphics and an addictive challenge. Though the Japanese version is fairly accessible, buy the US cart to get the best value from this. 9/10

LEMMINGS (JAP/US/UK)
Sunsoft, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 86%
A hit on every format it's been released on. It takes a while to get to grips with, but *Lemmings* is one of the most original, ingenious and addictive games ever. Each level has a password, and there are loads of them (more than, for example, the Amiga version). A *Super Play* favourite, so you've really got to buy this. 8/10

MAGICAL GUY ADVENTURE (JAP)
Bandai, 4 Mbit
1 player
A jolly platform game combining wacky Japanese humour with cute sprites and backdrops. Not in the class of *Super Mario World* but entertaining anyway. 6/10

MAGIC SWORD (JAP/US)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player
Capcom's first disappointing release – not surprising when you consider how bad the original arcade game was. Instead of giving the conversion the *UN Squadron* treatment and improving the gameplay for the SNES version, the programmers have simply translated the original. And they haven't done that very well. A bodge job on the whole, with mixed quality graphics and terrible slow-down. 6/10

MARIO PAINT (JAP/US)
Nintendo, 8 Mbit + BB
1 'player'

A painting and music package that's really only for youngsters. It's very basic (only 16 colours? On a system with thousands?) and once you've drawn something, what do you do with it? It's free with the Nintendo mouse – but wait until that's on sale separately. 3/10

METAL JACKET (JAP)
Atlus, 8 Mbit
1 player
A horrible experience. Atlus aren't doing themselves any favours attempting a platform game – a genre where you have to be really good to stand out. This is an *E-SWAT* clone with stilted animation, dire sound and inept gameplay. 2/10

MICKEY'S MAGICAL QUEST(JAP/US)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 89%
One of the most polished platformers around, though it's marred by the inclusion of infinite continues. Stunning backdrops, sprites and varied enough to impress anyone – it's just a shame it's too easy. 9/10

MUSYA (JAP)
Datam, 8 Mbit
1 player
One of the worst Super Famicom games ever – though it's up against stiff competition. Initially, the nicely shaded backdrops give it the look of a *Ninja Spirit* clone, but when you see your hero mince along and twiddle his stick, it palls. 3/10

NOLAN RYAN'S BASEBALL (US)
Romstar, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 75%

Just as slick as *Extra Innings*, but without the cute characters, and it's slightly trickier to control. Still, not a bad game overall. 7/10

NORTH STAR KEN V (JAP)
Toei, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
This addition to an inexplicably popular range of Zelda-style FRP's – it's based on *Fist Of The North Star*, believe it or not – looks to the untrained British eye at least, like a big pile of steaming nob. If you speak Japanese it might, of course, be completely brilliant – but we very much doubt it. Impossible to judge. ?/10

OTHELLO WORLD (JAP)
Tsukuda, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Plays a strong game of *Othello* (if you set it to 'difficult'), looks good, and has some cute touches. But why would anyone want to spend $40 on a cartridge that plays *Othello*? Fine for brushing up your technique, but otherwise very sad indeed. 6/10

OUT OF THIS WORLD (US)
Alternative names: Outer World (JAP), Another World (UK)
Interplay, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 81%
The graphics on this one are superb – playing it is just like watching a film. The action is varied, and there are lots of great cinema-style close-up shots, but there isn't enough there to make it a classic. 8/10

PAPER BOY 2 (US/UK)
Mindscape, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP2 29%
In this game you're a newspaper delivery boy (or girl) and the object is to cycle along, er, delivering newspapers. There are some obstacles to avoid, things to hit with papers for bonus points, and that's about it. It's horribly boring, and really can't be recommended. 2/10

PARODIUS (JAP)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player

A brilliant conversion of the coin-op, and one that easily ranks as the best of Konami's recent string of classics for the SNES. Superbly colourful sprites, a hilarious sense of the bizarre, and some excellent music are just the icing on the cake. Hugely enjoyable (though a little easy). 9/10

PEBBLE BEACH GOLF LINKS (JAP/US)
T&E Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 4 players, SP3 82%
The third addition to the 3D golf series,

Coming up with this chart wasn't easy. There's *Street Fighter II*, and there's, well, the rest of them. Nevertheless, if you like beat-'em-ups, these are the ones to look for...

3 RANMA 1/2
Very Japanese. Superb anime graphics and plenty of good jokes.

and unsurprisingly very similar to the others. Accurate down to the waves on the beach, but the porn movie music is laughable.

8/10

PGA TOUR GOLF (JAP/US)
Electronic Arts, 4 Mbit
1 to 4 players, SP3 60%

Slick presentation, but it masks the fact that this is a poor SNES conversion of an otherwise excellent sports game. On other systems *PGA Tour* is *the* golf sim, but here EA's lack of SNES expertise scuppers things. Still, you could do worse.

6/10

PHALANX (JAP/US)
Kemco, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 70%
Horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-ups are two a penny on the Super Nintendo, and a new contender really has to do something different to stand out. This one has some decent graphics and challenging gameplay, but at the end of the day is pretty forgettable.

7/10

PILOTWINGS (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP1 92%
SNES-owning aviation fans aren't spoilt for choice at present, but this should be enough to, er, spin their propellers for now. It has a huge range of flying machines (from parachutes to helicopters), and super-smooth 3D graphics, and there's even a decent game in there, too.

9/10

PIPEDREAM (JAP)
Bullet-Proof, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 66%
A well turned-out puzzle game where you've got to link different shaped bits of pipe together. Okay, but it gets boring without ever being exciting to start with.

6/10

PITFIGHTER (US/UK)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, 14%
An appalling conversion of a popular coin-op. Dire graphics and awful gameplay. The pits.

1/10

POPULOUS (JAP/UK/UK)
Imagineer, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 85%
The original Japanese version of a classic UK game that puts you in the shoes of God Almighty himself. A smashing game, though it *can* get frustrating (and quite boring) eventually.

8/10

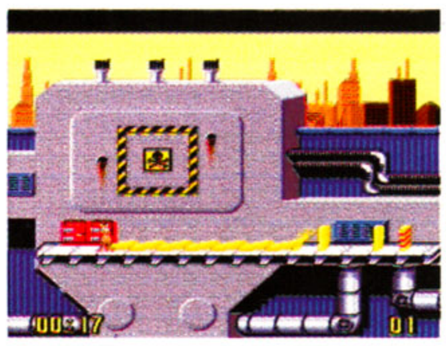
PRINCE OF PERSIA (JAP/US)
NCS, 8 Mbit
1 player
A superb conversion of the computer classic with new graphics, a brilliant intro and a fab *Lawrence Of Arabia*-style soundtrack. Not an easy game, but the password system allows progression without too much trouble. A classic.

9/10

PRO SOCCER (JAP)
Alternative name: World League Soccer (US)
Imagineer, 4 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players
A really shaky conversion of *Kick Off*, with crude graphics and hopeless gameplay.

3/10

PUSHOVER (UK)
Ocean, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP3 78%



A very enjoyable domino toppling-style puzzle game, converted from home computers, that provides a great deal of short-term fun., Once all the 100 levels are completed however, it's unlikely you'll actually ever return to it.

7/10

Q*BERT 3 (US)
NTVIC, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 67%
The nostalgia value of this can't be questioned, as players of the 10-year-old coin-op will confirm. And neither can the effort that's gone into making it look the part. But no matter how hard you try, *Q*Bert 3* is never more than mildly amusing.

6/10

RACE DRIVIN' (US)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP3 35%

Fans of the original coin-op are going to be horrified by this driving game. 3D polygons and the SNES go together like, um, chips and custard. Needless to say it's an appalling display of poor programming on unsuitable hardware. Just say no.

3/10

RAIDEN TRAD (JAP)
Alternative name: Densetsu (US)
Toei, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A great game on the PC Engine and Mega Drive, but slow on the SNES and not recommended. It should have been a good game – but the programmers were too inexperienced on the machine to do the job properly.

4/10

RAMPART (US)
Electronic Arts, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 79%
So primitive-looking you wonder why it was allowed to live. (Well, apart from the great 3D bit.) But a few minutes playing reveal a game that's actually fab fun, and two-player mode almost rivals *Mario Kart*.

8/10

RANMA 1/2 (JAP)
NCS Masiya, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A neat one-on-one beat-'em-up with some very odd anime characters (who change sex when they get wet, and sometimes into giant pandas – don't worry, there's a Japanese TV series which explains it all). Mismatching of characters can be a problem, but on the whole it's great to look at and play.

8/10

RIVAL TURF (JAP/US/UK)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 58%
Final Fight's main rival. Not as 'together' as its opponent – more repetitive baddies and rougher animation are the main qualms – but it has the enormous advantage of simultaneous two-player action, including a *Street Fighter II*-style head-to-head mode. Which one do you go for? Um, well there's always *Turtles*...

6/10

THE ROCKETEER (JAP/US)
IGS, 8 Mbit
1 player

Lovely graphics, but that's about it. It consists of watching a string of mini-games in which you don't really get much say – it's just luck if you proceed from one game to the next. Awful.

3/10

ROBOCOP 3 (US/UK)
Ocean, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 66%
A neat 'Robocop' feel, but gameplay-wise this is severely wanting. It's frustratingly difficult, and perseverance is rewarded by an unimaginative shooter with little connection with the film.

5/10

ROGER CLEMENS' MVP BASEBALL (US)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 73%
Baseball games don't come much better presented than this. Fab animation and action viewed through different camera angles makes this thoroughly enjoyable.

7/10

ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS II (JAP/US)
Koei, 8 Mbit + BB
1-12 players

Loads of interlocking ancient Chinese kingdoms make alliances, split up, then make other alliances, lots of people (presumably) get killed, and we can't make sense of any of it. The recently-become-available US version reveals a simple little game under all the maps and text-boxes, but still not recommended.

5/10

RPM RACING (JAP/US)
Interplay, 4 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players
RPM stands, in this case, for Radical Psycho Machines – ridiculous trucks with big tyres that fascinate Americans. The scrolling's rough, you need clairvoyant powers to anticipate corners, and it uses flickery interlace graphics to no obvious effect. But good fun.

6/10

SD DODGEBALL (JAP)
Banpresto, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players
Based on an imaginary sport which involves knocking out the opposing team by throwing the ball at them, this is one of a series of Dodgeball games (*Fire Dodgeball*'s another) and the worst.

5/10

SD GREAT BATTLE (JAP)
Banpresto, 6 Mbit
1 player

Japan's hugely popular Super Deformer series has spawned a lot of Super Famicom spin-off games, and they sell well, no matter how cruddy they are! This was the first to emerge, and isn't anything to get excited about, being a crusty old arcade adventure with tedious gameplay. You have been warned!

4/10

SD GUNDAM (JAP)
Bandai, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
Again we head off to Japanese RPG-land, this variant starring a 'Super Deformed' (ie squished and cutified) version of *Gundam*, the most popular 'mecha' robot character in Japan. The format is traditional Japanese RPG, but the crappy graphics and sound and use of Japanese text make it unplayable. Impossible to judge.

?/10

SIM CITY (JAP/US/UK)
Maxis/Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP1 84%
Build the city of your dreams... then bring it to its knees! The SNES version of this all-time great is probably the best yet (even more user-friendly) although it hardly pushes the machine to its limits. Extremely addictive, at least in the short-term.

8/10

SIM EARTH (JAP)
Imagineer, 6 Mbit + BB
1 player
A follow-on from *Sim City* that tries to bite off more than it can chew. You're basically put in charge of the entire planet, which would be horrendous enough in itself, but when the whole game's in Japanese... er, no thanks. Impossible to judge

?/10

SONIC BLAST MAN (JAP)
Taito, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 69%

A scrolling beat-'em-up with a niftier central character than most – he's a superhero with a deadly line in punches. It's a beat-'em-up nonetheless, though, and consequently gets pretty dull.

7/10

SOUL BLAZER (US)
Alternative title: Soul Blader (JAP)
Enix, 8 Mbit + BB
1 players, SP2 89%
Slick, graphically gorgeous and not entirely unlike *Zelda* (ie an RPG, Japanese-style). Avoid *Soul Blader*, the Japanese version (unless you're Japanese).

8/10

SPACE FOOTBALL (US)
Alternative name: Super Linearball (JAP)
Triffix, 4 Mbit
1 player
If you've played *Ballblazer* on the Commodore 64 before, that's probably the closest to this – football, played between two 'things' on a fast, 3D scrolling pitch. It's an idea that provides lots of thrills in the short-term, but it isn't really enough to justify splashing out this much loot on a game.

6/10

SPANKY'S QUEST (JAP/US)
Natsume, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A monkey called Spanky? Bouncing

INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE
SUPER PLAY

TOP 5 BEAT-'EM-UPS

1 STREET FIGHTER II (94%)
Ho hum. It's difficult to see how a beat-'em-up could possibly be better than this. Graphics, sound and gameplay are as near as possible arcade-perfect.

2 TURTLES IV (84%)
Nothing else comes close to *SFII*, sadly, but *Turtles* has nice graphics and lots of variety. It's a little easy to complete, but we like it.

4 FINAL FIGHT (86%)
Very popular, and its fans will defend it to the last. The graphics aren't bad, but it's one-player only.

5 SONIC BLAST MAN (69%)
Similar to *Final Fight.*, though funnier and with better graphics. But without the same following.

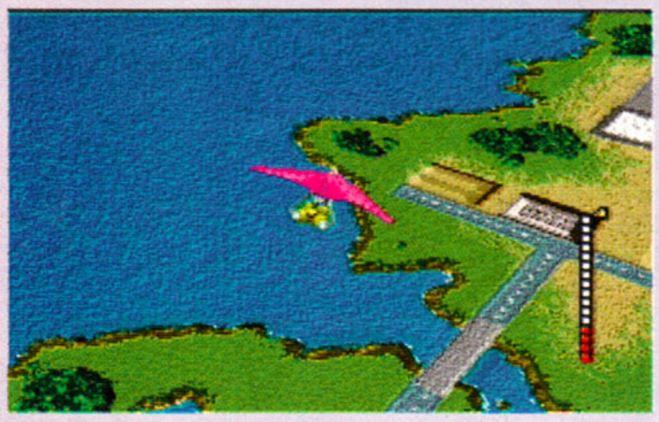
INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE
SUPER PLAY

TOP 5
GAME GRAPHICS

Graphics-wise, the Super Nintendo can do things that would make even a *Terminator* film turn red with embarrassment. The operative word there being 'can'. It's no use in the wrong hands. So which are the right ones? Basically, which games *look* the best? We've come up with five of *Super Play*'s good-looking favourites.

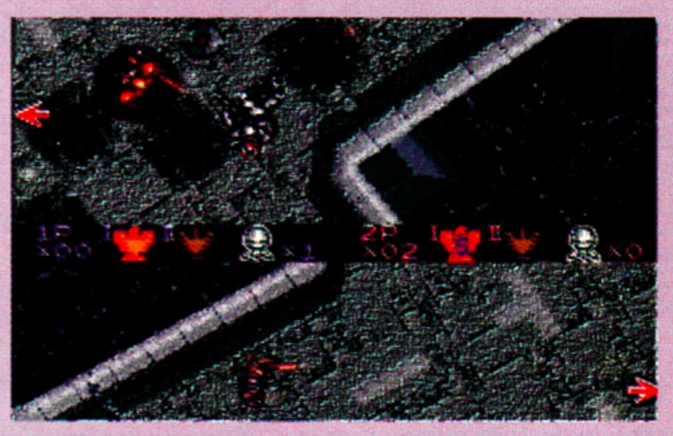
1 AXELAY (85%)
'The best graphics ever', as we said in our review, so we thought this should be at the top of the list.

2 MICKEY'S MAGICAL QUEST (89%)
Really colourful, great parallax scrolling, the best ever sprites and an amazing cartoon feel.



3 PILOTWINGS (92%)
A sure way of convincing somebody to exchange their right arm for a Super Nintendo.

4 STREET FIGHTER II (94%)
The gigantic figures and highly-detailed backgrounds simply couldn't be done on any other machine.



5 SUPER PROBOTECTOR (90%)
A wonderful mix of different styles, with huge explosions and some brilliant Mode 7 bits.

bubbles? You just wander round lots of similar-looking screens, killing baddies (with the bubbles) and collecting keys. Boring. **5/10**

SPIDERMAN & THE X-MEN (US/UK)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 72%

A multi-character platform romp that loses its appeal fairly quickly. Plain and unattractive graphics are the order of the day, only saved by some really unimaginative music. Fun for a while, but somehow it looks dated already. **7/10**

SPINDIZZY WORLDS (JAP/US/UK)
Ascii, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 69%
Spindizzy's sparkle seems to have dulled a little since its heyday on the Spectrum, partly thanks to the game's shift of emphasis from exploration to puzzle solving. A neat little thing all the same. **6/10**

STREET FIGHTER II (JAP/US/UK)
Capcom, 16 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 94%
This is the game that's selling SNES' by the bucket- load. It's 'streets' ahead of other beat-'em-ups, and a near-perfect conversion of the popular coin-op. A must buy, though expensive on official release. **9/10**

STRIKE GUNNER (JAP/US/UK)
Athena, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 65%
Another average vertical blaster, with poor and unvaried backdrops, but reasonable sprites and some nice explosions. A dull game that only gets interesting in two-player mode when both ships can link together for mega firepower – not enough to recommend it, though. **6/10**

SUPER ADVENTURE ISLAND (JAP/US/UK)
Hudson Soft, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 75%
Simplistic, *Wonderboy*-style gameplay abounds in this third instalment of the series made popular on the NES. Aside from the ugly Master Higgins, the colourful backgrounds and impressive Yuzo Koshiro dance tunes make this an attractive game. However, infinite continues mean this *is* a short-lived experience. **7/10**

SUPER ALESTE (JAP/UK)
Alternative name: Space Megaforce (US)
Toho/Compile, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 87%

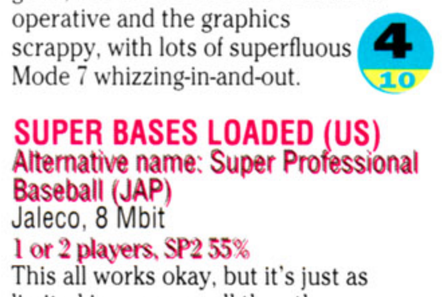
The first evidence that the SNES could handle a manically busy *Gunhed*-style shooter with ease. Incredible sprite handling (coupled with Mode 7) and no slow-down mean it's more a technical achievement than particularly well designed, and it's a bit weapon-crazy – and hence unchallenging for some. But, having said that, it's an excellent buy. **8/10**

SUPER BASEBALL SIMULATOR 1,000 (JAP/US)
Culture Brain, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 49%
Another middling baseball game. The pitching and batting are both quite good, but the fielders are a bit unco-operative and the graphics scrappy, with lots of superfluous Mode 7 whizzing-in-and-out. **4/10**

SUPER BASES LOADED (US)
Alternative name: Super Professional Baseball (JAP)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 55%
This all works okay, but it's just as limited in scope as all the other baseball games on the SNES, and the graphics are horribly jerky. **5/10**

SUPER BASES LOADED II (US)
Alternative name: Super Professional Baseball II (JAP)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 69%
Extraordinarily and uncannily similar to *Super Bases Loaded I*. (See above.) **6/10**

SUPER BATTLETANK (US)
Absolute, 4 Mbit
1 player



The prehistoric *Battlezone* coin-op gets a new lease of life in this Gulf War tank game. It looks livelier than the wire-frame graphics of the original, and has some good explosions and exciting link sequences, but, quite frankly, it's still boring. **5/10**

SUPER BIRDIE RUSH (JAP)
Data East, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP3 76%
This one's a cute cartoony-looking golf game that features some very nicely drawn fairways and greens – indeed, there's not much wrong with it. However, this isn't as playable as *Hole-in-One*, though it has the advantage over it of not being quite so dry in presentation. **7/10**

SUPER BOWLING (JAP/US)
Athena, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 48%

There really isn't enough to bowling to fill out a whole game. This one pads itself out with neat graphical interludes and so on, but the real thing's so much more fun. (And much cheaper.) **4/10**

SUPER CASTLEVANIA IV (JAP/US/UK)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 91%
A huge, sprawling sequel to the NES games. After a dull start this turns into one of the best platform games ever. More action is needed, but superb parallax and incredible sound-tracks generate an atmosphere appreciated by serious gamers. **9/10**

SUPER CHINESE WORLD (JAP)
Culture Brain, 8 Mbit
1 player
A sequel to the popular 8-bit Famicom game *Little Ninja Bros*. The overhead viewpoint changes at regular intervals for combat. Cutish but rather 8-bit. Impossible to judge. **?/10**

SUPER CUP SOCCER (JAP)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A rival to *Super Soccer*? Not really. This takes a side-on, jerkily scrolling viewpoint and isn't going to impress anyone. That's a shame, because it goes into lots of detail – moves and rules-wise – and there are some nice graphical touches. **6/10**

SUPER DOUBLE DRAGON (JAP/US)
Technos, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, 68%
A wide variety of moves, and some very satisfying thumping and kicking action, inject a bit of life into a deceptively crappy looking beat-'em-up. Enjoyable, but a bit easy and rather '8 bit' all round. **7/10**

SUPER DUNKSHOT (JAP)
Alternative name: NCAA Basketball (US)
HAL, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players

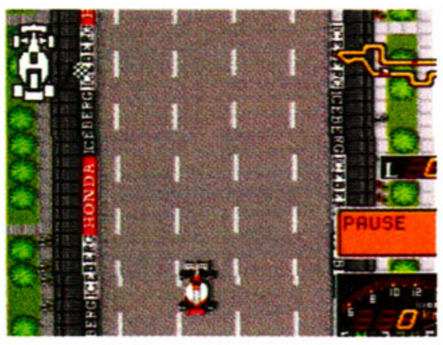
Famous for its 3D graphics – the pitch spins around and zooms in and out impressively. Brilliant sound effects, too. And it plays a splendid game of basketball. A little slow at times, perhaps, and a little confusing, but on the whole, great. **8/10**

SUPER EDF (JAP/US)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 player
A pretty, horizontally scrolling effort, but with some boring and unchallenging gameplay. Similar to the coin-op it's based on, *EDF* has some well drawn backdrops and sprites. But the music is bland, and slow-down spoils the action. **6/10**

SUPER F1 CIRCUS (JAP)
Nichibutsu, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP1 83%
This looks ordinary, but is one of the

few overhead-view racing games that works. Fast, with a good 'driving feel' and plenty of options to cater for the long-term player. **7/10**

SUPER F1 GRAND PRIX (JAP)
Video System Co, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player



Nothing to do with the popular Amiga *F1 Grand Prix*, this is along the same lines as *Battle Grand Prix*, without the split-screen two-player mode. That means you get to see more of the track on-screen, and hence slightly more warning of corners coming up, but not much. It's a matter of taste, and very difficult. **5/10**

SUPER FIRE PRO WRESTLING (JAP)
Human, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Nowhere near as smart-looking as *WWF*, but a much more challenging game, (the 20 available wrestlers behave differently, for a start.) But in one-player mode it's virtually impossible to beat the computer. Okay, if you can live with the dull visuals and manage to haul in a friend. **6/10**

SUPER GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS (JAP/US/UK)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 85%
Another sequel, unique to the SNES. It's got some fab graphics (with a little slow-down) and nice tunes, but it's very tough – and, as it lacks battery back-up or passwords, it can be frustrating. The huge levels only have a few restart points, too. **8/10**

SUPER MARIO KART (JAP/US)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP1 93%
It's... It's... words fail us. The best driving game ever, the best two-player game ever, and quite possibly the best, well, game ever. It's perfect. Compatibility with UK machines is questionable, though, so it might be an idea to wait for the official release in January. **9/10**

SUPER MARIO WORLD (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 94%
What more can we say about this huge game? On the downside, the backgrounds become repetitive, but apart from that it's a gameplayer's dream come true – you'll want to spend weeks discovering every secret bit. Though real *Mario* aficionados tend to prefer Mario's third trip, this remains (along with *Zelda*) Nintendo's flagship game. **9/10**

SUPER NINJA (JAP)
Koei, 12 Mbit + BB
1 player

You'd never know this was 12 meg – it has all the flat colours, simple graphics and laughable animation of an early NES game. It uses the same overhead view as *Zelda* et al, but being Japanese proves impossible to play. (Some loss.) Impossible to judge. **?/10**

SUPER OFF ROAD (JAP/US)
Trade West, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A variation on *Super Sprint*, but we're allowed to see the whole track for once (phew). We're racing monster trucks with a 3D(ish) perspective. The trucks look great bouncing round the course, and in the short-term it's good fun. Great rock soundtrack. **7/10**

SUPER PANG (JAP)
Alternative name: Super Buster Bros (US)
Capcom, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP1 72%
The arcade original was a fantastic game, but one that allowed two people to pop bubbles at once. This is a good conversion, with smart graphics and plenty of speed, but unfortunately only one can play, and that soon gets boring. **7/10**

SUPER PLAY ACTION FOOTBALL (US)
Nintendo, 4Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP2 71%
A faithful implementation of American football that'll please fans, but not the *John Madden*-basher we've been waiting for. We're keeping our fingers crossed for *Madden '93*. **7/10**

SUPER PROBOTECTOR (UK)
Alternative names: Contra 3 (US)/Contra Spirits (JAP)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 90%
The best platform shoot-'em-up around. Superb use of Mode 7 and an amazing sound-track put this in the super league. Brill two-player action makes it essential stuff. **9/10**

SUPER R-TYPE (JAP/US/UK)
Irem, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 72%
Beautifully designed baddies, and some of the best graphics on the SNES, make this one of the best-looking shooters around. Not perfect, thanks to jerky scrolling, terrible slow-down and no restart points. It also lacks the best parts of the coin-op – *R-Type II*, surprisingly, not the original game – on which it's based. **7/10**

SUPER SHANGHAI (JAP)
Hot B, 8 Mbit
1 player

It's hard to see what's 'super' about it, other than a show-offy intro and the odd silly sound effect, but as a version of *Shanghai*, the puzzle game, it works. Relaxing and compulsive, but not great. **6/10**

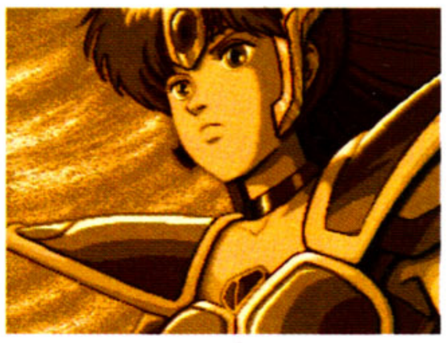
SUPER SMASH TV (JAP/US/UK)
Acclaim, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 84%
A translation of the ultra-violent coin-op, this is incredibly good short-term fun. No slow-down, plenty of tough bits and bags of addictiveness – you'll keep coming back to it. Recommended. **8/10**

SUPER SOCCER (US/UK)
Alternative name: Super Formation Soccer (JAP)
Human/Nintendo, 4Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 83%

This is probably the closest you'll get to real footy on the SNES. Impressive 3D graphics, and jolly good fun to play. But it doesn't really feel much like football as such, perhaps because the rules have been messed around a bit. We're still waiting for the SNES' equivalent of *Sensible Soccer*. **8/10**

SUPER TENNIS (JAP/US/UK)
Tonkin House, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 92%
One of the best tennis games on any machine (only rivalled by two fab tennis games on the PC Engine). The range of shots available is amazing. It's not all bashing a ball backwards and forwards, either – there's a comprehensive line-up of tournaments and things to enter, too. Brilliant. **9/10**

SUPER VALLIS (JAP)
Telenet, 8 Mbit
1 player

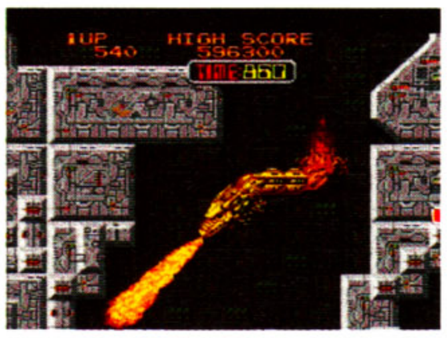


A conversion of the PC Engine CD ROM game, featuring the exploits of lots of Japanese girly characters but absolutely no excitement. It's far too contrived, boring and linear to bother with. **5/10**

SUPER WAGAN ISLAND (JAP)
Namcot, 8 Mbit
1 player
Funny, with cute graphics and likeable characters, this is a semi-arcade, semi-text-based adventure for the younger player – we got a fair way into it without understanding what was going on. (It's all in Japanese!) Impossible to judge. **?/10**

SUPER WWF (JAP/US/UK)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 74%
Marvellous graphics, and enormous fun to play – short-term. But, all the different wrestlers behave exactly the same. And there's no tournament system like on other versions, either – you win or lose a fight and that's it. The upshot of all this is that *WWF* can't be recommended. **7/10**

SYLVALION (JAP)
Toshiba EMI, 8 Mbit
1 player



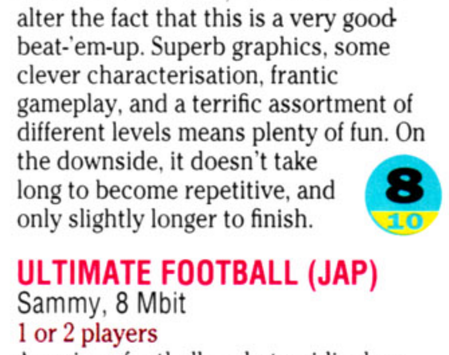
An odd maze-based scrolling shoot-'em-up where you guide a dragon down baddy-infested passages. It looks tacky but is actually quite good. Not much of a challenge, though, and not one to return to. **6/10**

TECMO TEAM SOCCER (JAP)
Tecmo, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players
Yikes! A Super Famicom football management game! And it's all in Japanese! There are some dynamic match highlights, but unless you can read Japanese and have the patience of a elephant, stay away from this. Impossible to judge. **?/10**

THUNDER SPIRITS (JAP/US)
Toshiba EMI, 8 Mbit
1 player
A conversion of the well respected Mega Drive game *Thunderforce 3*, but it isn't anywhere near as good on the SNES. Guess why? Yep, slow-down spoils the action! Everything else is very similar to the MD game – ie no effort has been made to use any of the special features that the SNES can offer – which results in rather a missed opportunity. **6/10**

TKO BOXING (US)
Alternative name: World Championship Boxing (JAP)
Sofel, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Boxing games are very difficult to pull off, and this is the kind of thing that tends to happen as a result. It's well presented, but the gameplay is ridiculously simplistic and gets boring quickly. Steer clear. **3/10**

TOP GEAR (US/UK)
Alternative name: Top Racer (JAP)
Kemco, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 76%



So fast it'll make your eyes go squiffy. The screen is divided down the middle so two players can compete – just as well, as it's dull as a one-player game. The game was developed by Sheffield software house Gremlin, so fans of their *Lotus* games will be on familiar ground here. No smooth Mode 7 graphics or elaborate trackside detail, just lots of driving fun. **7/10**

TURTLES IV: TURTLES IN TIME (JAP/US/UK)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 84%
The Turtles themselves might long since have handed over their cult status to the current craze, but that doesn't alter the fact that this is a very good beat-'em-up. Superb graphics, some clever characterisation, frantic gameplay, and a terrific assortment of different levels means plenty of fun. On the downside, it doesn't take long to become repetitive, and only slightly longer to finish. **8/10**

ULTIMATE FOOTBALL (JAP)
Sammy, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
American football – what a ridiculous sport, eh? Still, that needn't prevent *Ultimate Football* from being a decent game. The problem is that this is so limited in both scope and technical merit that it can't really be recommended to anyone except real footy fans. **6/10**

ULTRAMAN (JAP/US/UK)
Bandai, 8 Mbit
1 player
At first it's laughable: a ridiculous-looking giant superhero beating up monsters that are every inch like people dressed up in rubber suits. But then you realise that's how it's actually meant to be. This is based on those dreadful Japanese disaster movies you occasionally see on Channel 4. Laughable. **4/10**

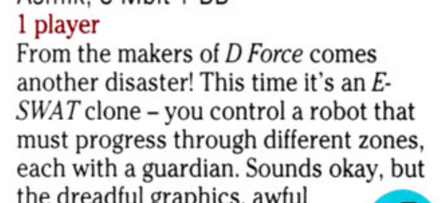
UN SQUADRON (US/UK)
Alternative name: Area 88 (JAP)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 91%

Brilliantly designed pseudo-conversion of the coin-op, and still one of the best games on the machine. Although it slows down in places, the action is still exciting. Sonically average, but graphically superb, and a *Super Play* favourite. **9/10**

WAIALAE COUNTRY CLUB (JAP/US)
T & E Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 4 players
This is the second of three golf games all using the same programming and graphics (the other two being *Augusta Golf* and *Pebble Beach*) but all representing different courses. Accurately depicted and probably the best golf series on the Super Nintendo by far. **8/10**

WHEEL OF FORTUNE (US)
Gametek, 4 Mbit
1 to 2 players, SP2 19%
A tedious quiz-show conversion that shouldn't have happened at all. A guest appearance by Vanna White is perhaps the only reason we actually gave it a mark at all. **1/10**

WINGS II (US)
Alternative names: Sky Mission (JAP), Blazing Skies (UK)
Namco, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP2 71%



Not quite as impressive as the screen-shots (see *Super Play* issue 2) make it out to be, but still an undeniably attractive and atmospheric World War I game. It's also the only Super Nintendo flight sim where you can actually shoot things. **7/10**

XANDRA'S BIG ADVENTURE (JAP)
Namcot, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 88%
An obscure platform game that ought to be better known. It's got a great central character, and the gameplay, though patchy, is fab. **8/10**

XARDION (JAP/US)
Asmik, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
From the makers of *D Force* comes another disaster! This time it's an *E-SWAT* clone – you control a robot that must progress through different zones, each with a guardian. Sounds okay, but the dreadful graphics, awful sonics, and pathetic gameplay and structure ruin it. **4/10**

YS III (JAP/US)
Tonkin House, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player

Not as good as the prequel (*YS Books 1 & 2*) on the PC-Engine CD ROM, but still a top quality RPG. Instead of an overview of the landscape, you get a scrolling side-on perspective, and though it's not as big as the first two games, it's fun. **7/10**

ZAN II (JAP)
Wolf Team, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
A pretty full-screen map view – and plenty of territory to conquer, but working out what else it boasts proves difficult. Another unintelligible-to-Brits war game, we're afraid. Impossible to judge. **?/10**

ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 93%
Brilliantly designed and implemented adventure that puts similar games to shame. This is, of course, utterly fabulous, though *Zelda* addicts may complain it's not quite as long and drawn out as previous games. **9/10**

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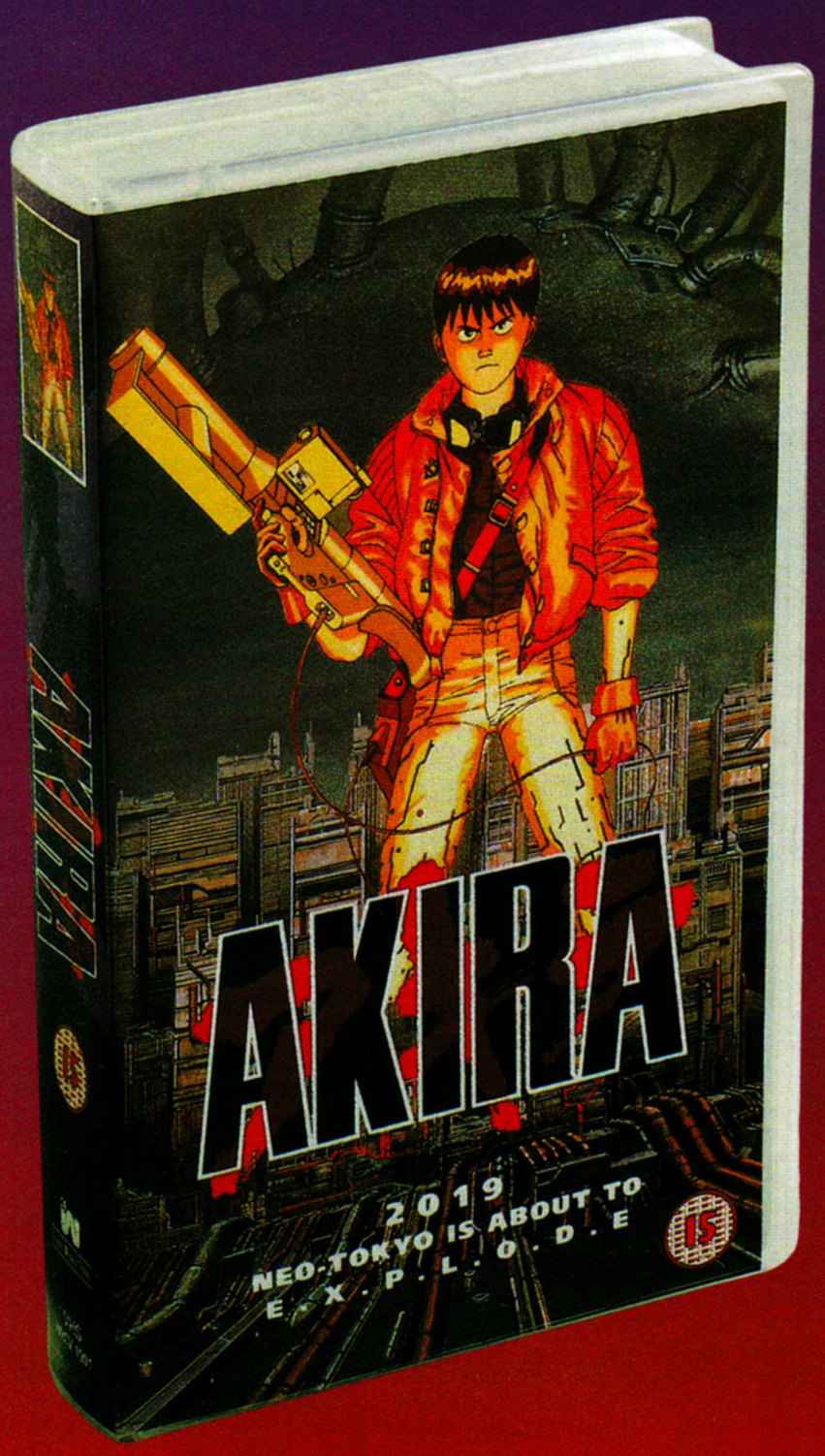

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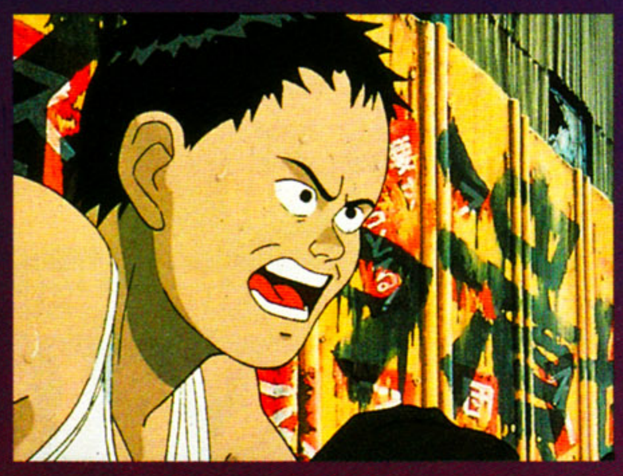

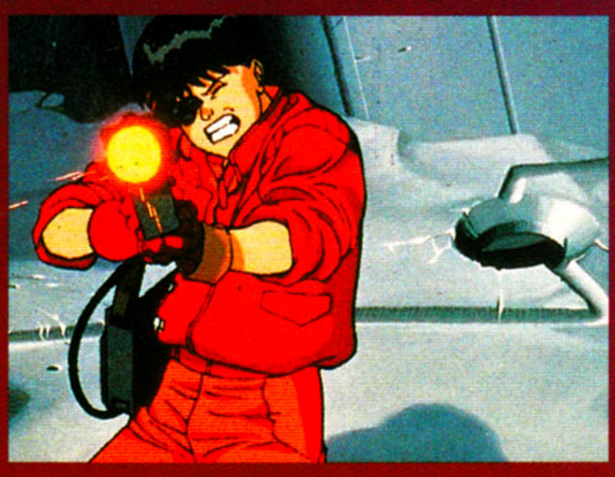

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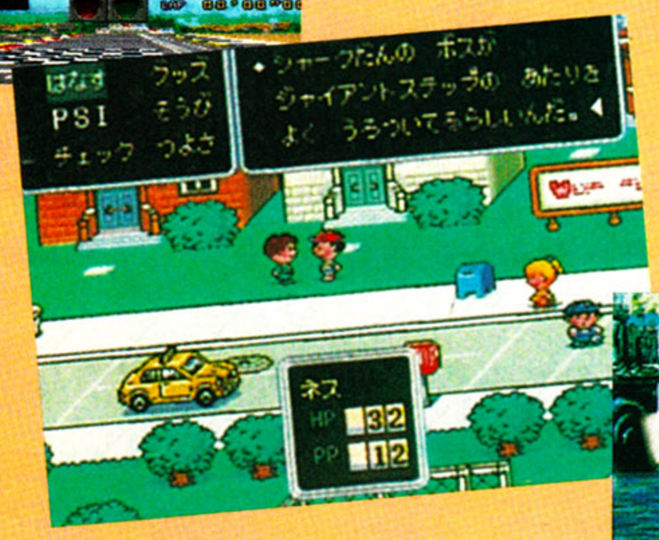
DATEBOOK

What's coming out and when, across the globe

Although this page might not look terribly exciting at first glance, if you take a closer look you'll see that it's actually a complete list of all Super Nintendo releases around the world over the next couple of months. You won't find anything like this in any of the other UK SNES mags (probably because it's such a bast to put together), so just you think yourself lucky. Erm, hurrah!

Left: *Axelay* expected in January for the UK. Below: *Ogre Battle* from Taito. Below left: *Septentrion*.

Right: *Super Parodius*, from Konami (UK). Below right: *Batman Returns* also from Konami (Jap). Below: *Elfaria* from Hudsonsoft (Jap) and inset *Super Chinese World 2* from Culture Brain (Jap).



Above: *The Combatribes* from Technos (US). Left: *Suzuki F1* (UK). Below left: *Mother 2* from Nintendo (Jap) and bottom: *Alien vs Predator* (Jap).

MONTH	DATE	GAME TITLE	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER	COUNTRY
Jan	1	Elfaria	RPG	Hudsonsoft	Jap
Jan	6	Alien vs Predator	action	IGS	Jap
Jan	14	Burai	action	IGS	Jap
Jan	16	Europe: Battle Front	strategy	Koei	Jap
Jan	22	Dragon's Earth	simulation	Human	Jap
Jan	29	Super Sokoban World	puzzle	Pack-in-Video	Jap
Jan	29	Warlord Nobunaga	strategy	Yanoman	Jap
Jan	29	Q*Bert 3	action	BAP	Jap
Jan	29	Krusty's World	platform game	Acclaim	Jap
Jan	29	Namcot Open	sport	Namcot	Jap
Jan	30	Star Force	shoot-'em-up	Nintendo	Jap
Jan	–	Populous 2	strategy	Imagineer	Jap
Jan	–	Ernald	RPG	Enix	Jap
Jan	–	Sangokushi	strategy	Wolf Team	Jap
Jan	–	Super Birriman	action	Hect	Jap
Jan	–	Ushio and Tora	action	Yutaka /Bandai	Jap
Jan	–	Might And Magic 2	RPG	G Amusements	Jap
Jan	–	The Search For Wally	action	Tomy	US
Jan	–	Alien 3	shoot-'em-up	Virgin	US
Jan	–	The Combatribes	beat-'em-up	Technos	US
Jan	–	Aerobiz	simulation	Koei	US
Jan	–	Super NBA Basketball	sport	Tecmo	US
Jan	–	Battleclash	Super Scope	Nintendo	UK
Jan	–	Mario Paint	art package	Nintendo	UK
Jan	–	Prince of Persia	platform	Mindscape	UK
Jan	–	Road Runner	arcade	Sunsoft	UK
Jan	–	Robocop III	shoot-'em-up	Ocean	UK
Jan	–	Super Basketball	sport	HAL	UK
Jan	–	Mickey's Magical Quest	platform	Capcom	UK
Jan	–	Super Off Road	driving game	Trade West	UK
Jan	–	Super Parodius	shoot-'em-up	Konami	UK
Jan	–	Desert Strike	shoot-'em-up	Electronic Arts	UK
Jan	–	NHLPA Hockey '93	sport	Electronic Arts	UK
Jan	–	PGA Tour Golf	sport	Electronic Arts	UK
Jan	–	Axelay	shoot-'em-up	Konami	UK
Jan	–	Suzuki F1	driving	Nintendo	UK
Jan	–	Best of the Best	beat-'em-up	Loriciel	UK
Feb	early	Super Chinese World 2	RPG	Culture Brain	Jap
Feb	19	Doraemon: World of Fairies	RPG	Epoc	Jap
Feb	19	Mah Jong	board game	POW	Jap
Feb	mid	The Steel Knight	RPG	Asmik	Jap
Feb	mid	F1 Grand Prix Part 2	driving game	Video System	Jap
Feb	late	Mother 2: Geeg's Rebellion	RPG	Nintendo	Jap
Feb	late	Bart's Nightmare	action	Acclaim	Jap
Feb	26	Batman Returns	action	Konami	Jap
Feb	26	NBA Pro Basketball	sport	Electronic Arts	Jap
Feb	–	Septentrion	action	Human	Jap
Feb	–	Leading Company	–	Koei	Jap
Feb	–	Sangokushi	strategy	Wolf Team	Jap
Feb	12	Pro Football '93	sport	Electronic Arts	Jap
Feb	–	Edongiura	–	Micro World	Jap
Feb	–	Sim Ant	strategy	Imagineer	Jap
Feb	–	Ogre Battle	strategy	Quest	Jap
Feb	–	Dragon's Lair	platform game	Data East	US
Feb	–	Cybernator	shoot-'em-up	Konami	US

NB You may have noticed this chart is dominated by Japanese releases. That's because a) there are more of them than American or British ones, b) games tend to come out in Japan about a month or so earlier than they do in America, so we mention them because they'll be the first time a game has appeared anywhere and c) because the Japanese are that much better at posting early release schedules. Where there's a space in the chart – usually an exact date or the type of game a release is – it's because we couldn't get hold of the information at time of press. Oh yeah, and if some of the titles sound a little peculiar, that's because they are literal translations from the Japanese. And finally, all the above information is as accurate as we can possibly manage, but unfortunately games often get delayed.

NEXT MONTH IN SUPER PLAY!

JAPANESE GAMES – THE INSIDE STORY

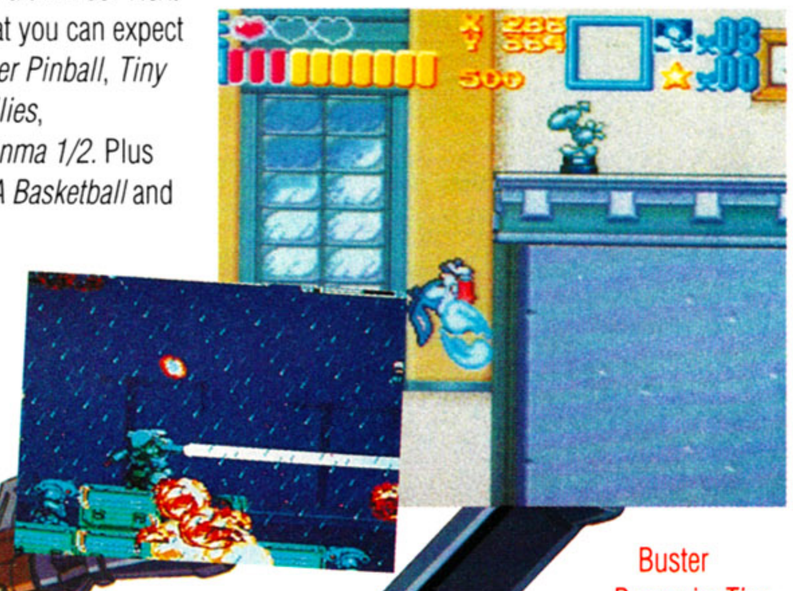
You've played *Super Mario World* to death. But have you ever stopped to wonder where it actually came from? The Japanese software publishing business is one of the most secretive industries in the world – Willy Wonka's chocolate factory is as nothing in comparison. So how do you find out about the inner workings of it? We equipped our man (we'll tell you who next month) with the latest in surveillance gear and sent him in. He'll be reporting back next issue with the inside details of some of the top Japanese games publishers – if he makes it out alive.

AND MORE: THE BEST TIPS!

There'll be the second halves of our *Actraiser* and *Another World* playing guides of course, and we'll also be blowing open *Desert Strike*, with a complete guide and some level codes. Plus: loads and loads of bang-up-to-date playing tips, Ask Ade (go on – ask him!) and Gamefreak.

THE BEST REVIEWS!

For those who haven't lost all faith in our Next Month predictions, here's what you can expect to be reviewed next time: *Super Pinball*, *Tiny Toon Adventures*, *King Of Rallies*, *Sleepwalker*, *Super Sumo*, *Ranma 1/2*. Plus UK reviews of *Suzuki F1*, *NCA Basketball* and *Prince Of Persia* and those *Assault Suits Valken*, *Super F1 Hero* and *Equinox* reviews we keep promising you too.



All action in *Assault Suits Valken*: full review next month!

Buster Bunny in *Tiny Toons*: next month!

We said we had to equip our man with lots of gear to tackle the Jap game industry, and we weren't joking! (Artist's impression).

The fifth issue of *Super Play* will emerge, pupa-like, on Thursday 4 February and flutter onto the shelves of a newsagent near you. (*Surely 'explode into the shops, taking no prisoners'? – Ed.*)

ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY!

CARTOGRAPHY

We do try not to throw jargon around too much, but occasionally the odd technical term still pops out. Here's what they all mean...

ACTION REPLAY: A special cart, made by Datel, that allows you to modify games (adding facilities like infinite lives or invincibility). See page 80 for ordering details.

ADAPTOR: These come in various forms, but their basic job is to allow software from one country to run on a SNES from another. (See 'grey import'.)

ANIME: (pronounced: ah-nee-may) The Japanese art of animation. In Japan, anime is everywhere, with its characters and style notably appearing in video games.

BATTERY BACK-UP (BB): Switch off a normal cart and all your hard work will disappear into electronic oblivion. Switch off one with battery back-up, however, and it'll keep all your high-scores and saved positions safely tucked away for another day.

BIT: A one or a zero. Stick lots of these together in the right order and you've got yourself a game. There are about 8 million in the average cart.

CD-ROM: A method for storing absolutely huge games on compact discs rather than cartridges. The Super Nintendo CD-ROM drive is due to appear next year, and promises to be a world-beater.

-CHAN: An affectionate suffix, meaning 'dear', that's stuck onto the end of a name by the Japanese to describe its owner as cute. The recently developed habit of creating small, cute cartoon versions of otherwise 'serious' characters like Ultraman has results that are often described as -chans.

CPU: Central Processing Unit, the chip at the heart of any computer. In the case of the Super Nintendo it's a 65sc816 running at 3.58 MHz (sorry, this probably isn't helping much), and it's in charge of all the graphics and sound chips that make your console so fab.

DSP: Digital signal processor. An extra chip included in a cartridge to provide improved 3D graphics, notably used in *Pilotwings* and *Super Mario Kart*.

GAME BOY: Nintendo's black-and-white hand-held console.

GREY IMPORT: Nintendo don't tend to release games in the UK until several months after they've appeared in Japan and the US. If you want to get hold of them sooner, you'll have to hunt around for a grey import version. The mail order ads in this issue are the best place to start, but remember, to use an import cart on a UK machine you'll need a special adaptor that costs £10-£20. (Again, check out Superstore on page 80.)

MBIT: Short for Megabit. A million bits.

MEGABYTE: 8 megabits – the average cart size.

MEGA DRIVE: (*Get outa town! – Ed.*)

MODE 7: A unique Super Nintendo feature that gives you 3D screen scaling and rotation.

NEO GEO: Hugely expensive console made by SNK that's in effect a portable arcade machine.

NES: Nintendo Entertainment System. The earlier, cruder console that came before the Super Nintendo. Rather like John the Baptist, in fact.

NTSC: The Japanese and American TV system. NTSC TVs are less flickery, running at 60Hz, but also less detailed, than UK ones, while NTSC machines run faster than PAL ones, and also use the full screen for the game image, without borders.

PAL: The 50Hz television system used in the UK. Unless you've bought an import machine, your Super Nintendo will use PAL, and will therefore plug straight into your telly's aerial socket. A foreign one won't, though, so make sure you've got a suitable SCART TV (see 'SCART') before buying one.

PAL BOOSTER: A piece of hardware that plugs into a Japanese or US Super Nintendo and allows the machine to be plugged into the aerial socket of an ordinary telly.

PARALLAX SCROLLING: The process where different parts of the background move at different speeds, giving the impression of depth.

PC ENGINE: Popular (in Japan, at least) games console made by NEC.

RPG: Role Playing Game. One of those weird games with wizards, orcs and action points in. Also occasionally called an FRP (Fantasy Role Playing game).

SCART: Posh TVs often have a SCART socket which cuts out a lot of the irrelevant electronics that deal with television programmes. If your telly's got one, plug your Super Nintendo into it for a better picture. (And if you've got an import machine, you'll *have* to plug it into the SCART socket.)

SCROLLING: Simply the process where the background moves across the screen, kind of like a movie camera panning.

SNES: Super Nintendo Entertainment System, aka Super Nintendo. The business.

SUPER SCOPE: The bazooka-shaped light gun for the SNES, which can now be bought with it.

SPRITE: Anything that moves around on the screen. Mario is a sprite.

SUPER DEFORMED (OR SD): A Japanese anime term. When a robot is super deformed, it's all squashed up, with big, cute eyes. Also see –chan.

SUPER FAMICOM: The Japanese name for the Super Nintendo.

SUPER FX CHIP: A new chip that'll be inserted into some carts from early next year, giving the games much improved 3D graphics capabilities.

TOTAL!: Our sister magazine, covering Game Boy and NES as well as Super Nintendo.

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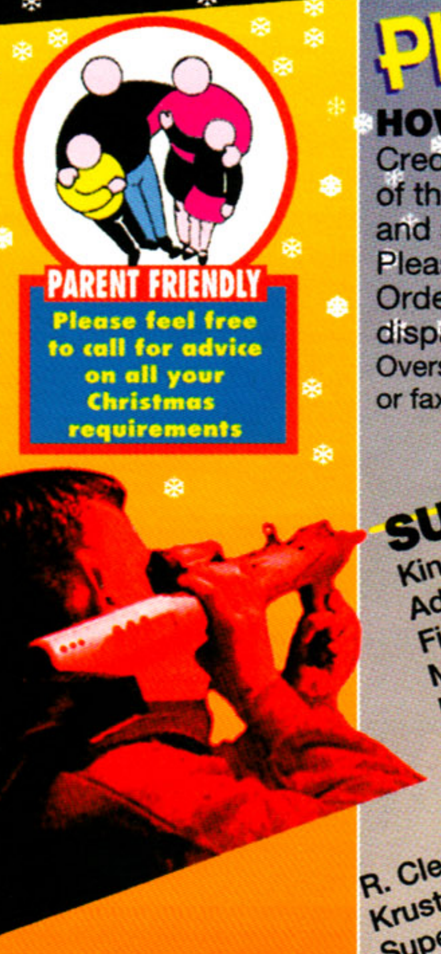

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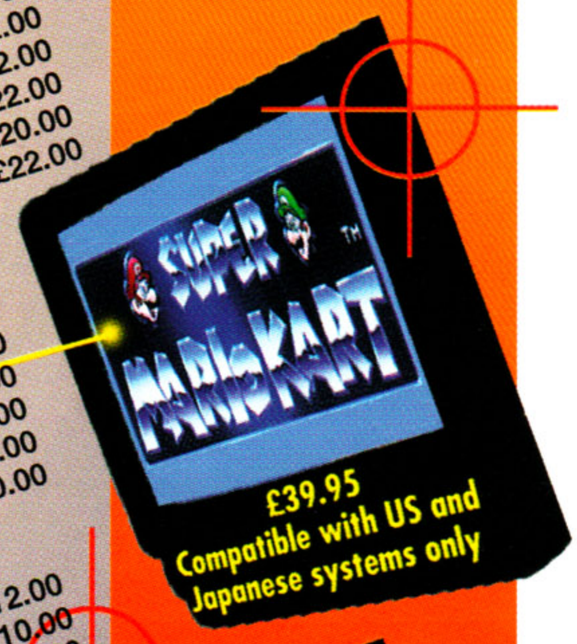

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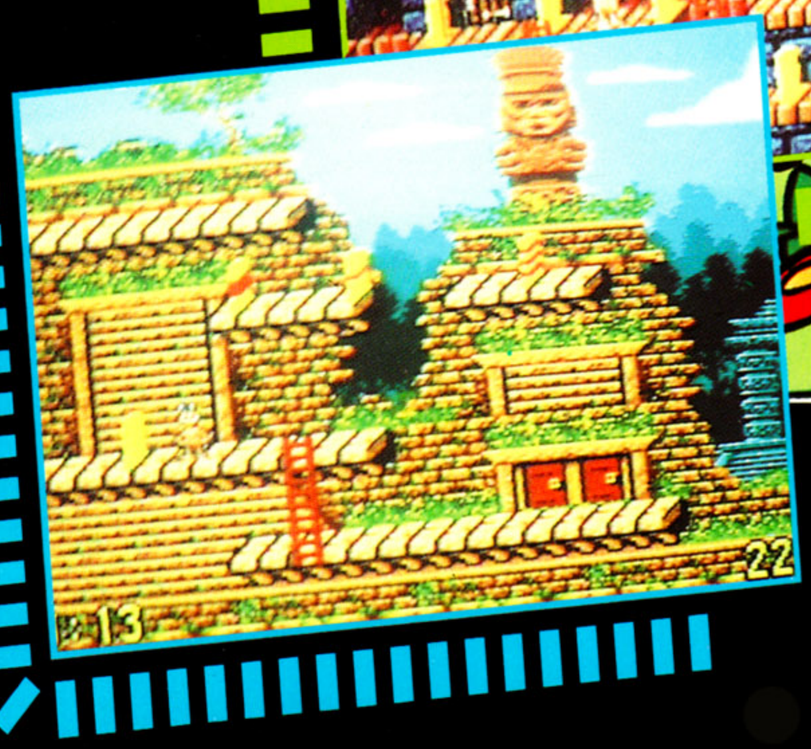

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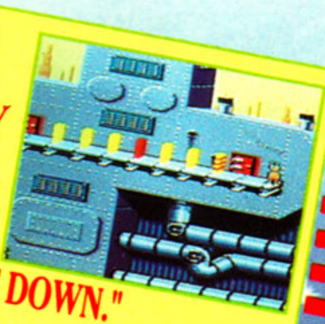

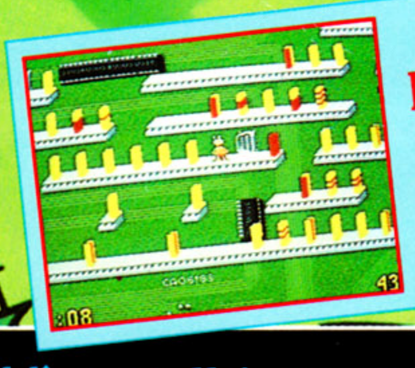

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